



THE ROAD TO

MARVEL

AVENGERS

AGE OF ULTRON

THE ART OF THE
MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE







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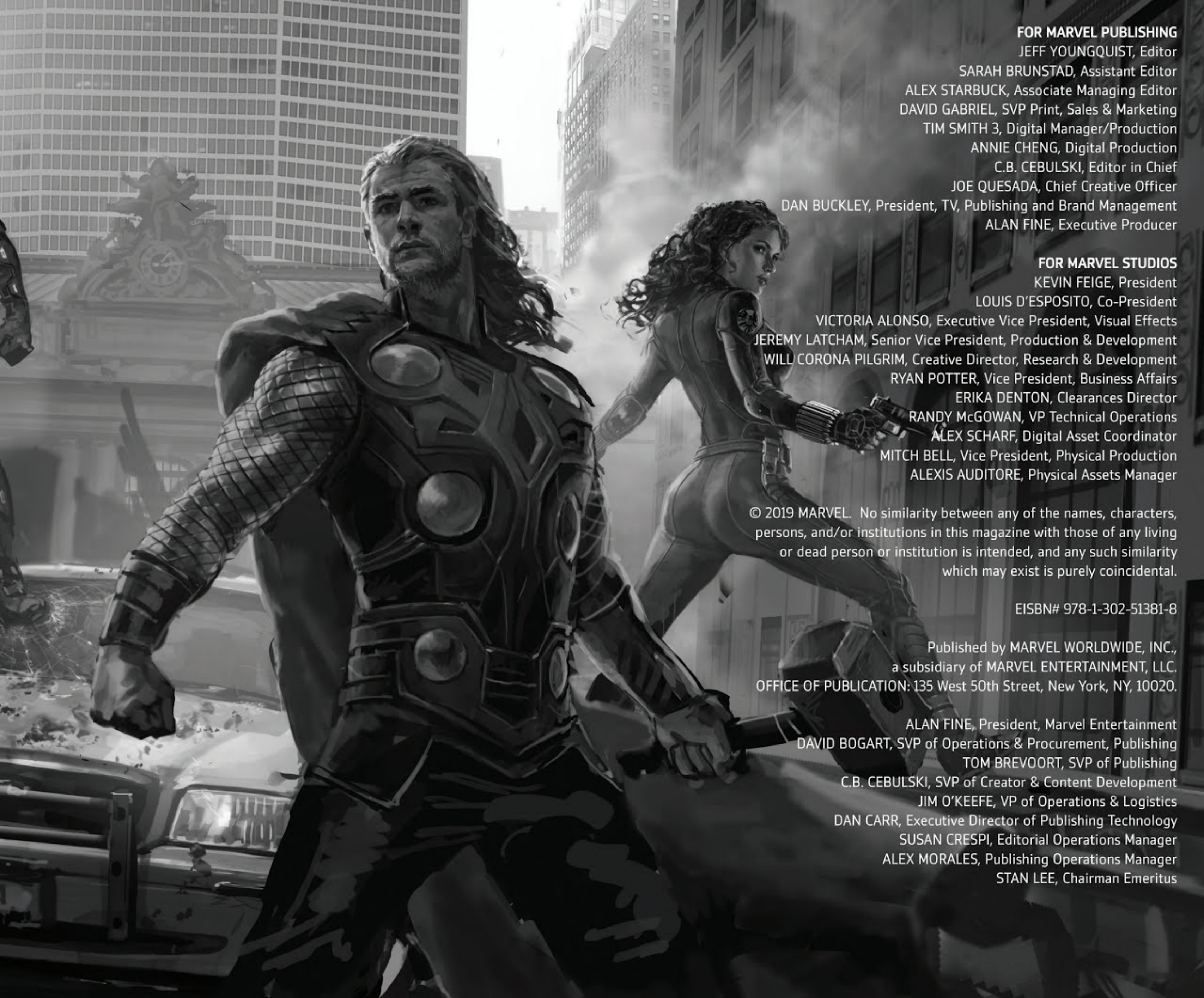
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Ryan Meinerding keyframe.



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Adi Granov keyframe.



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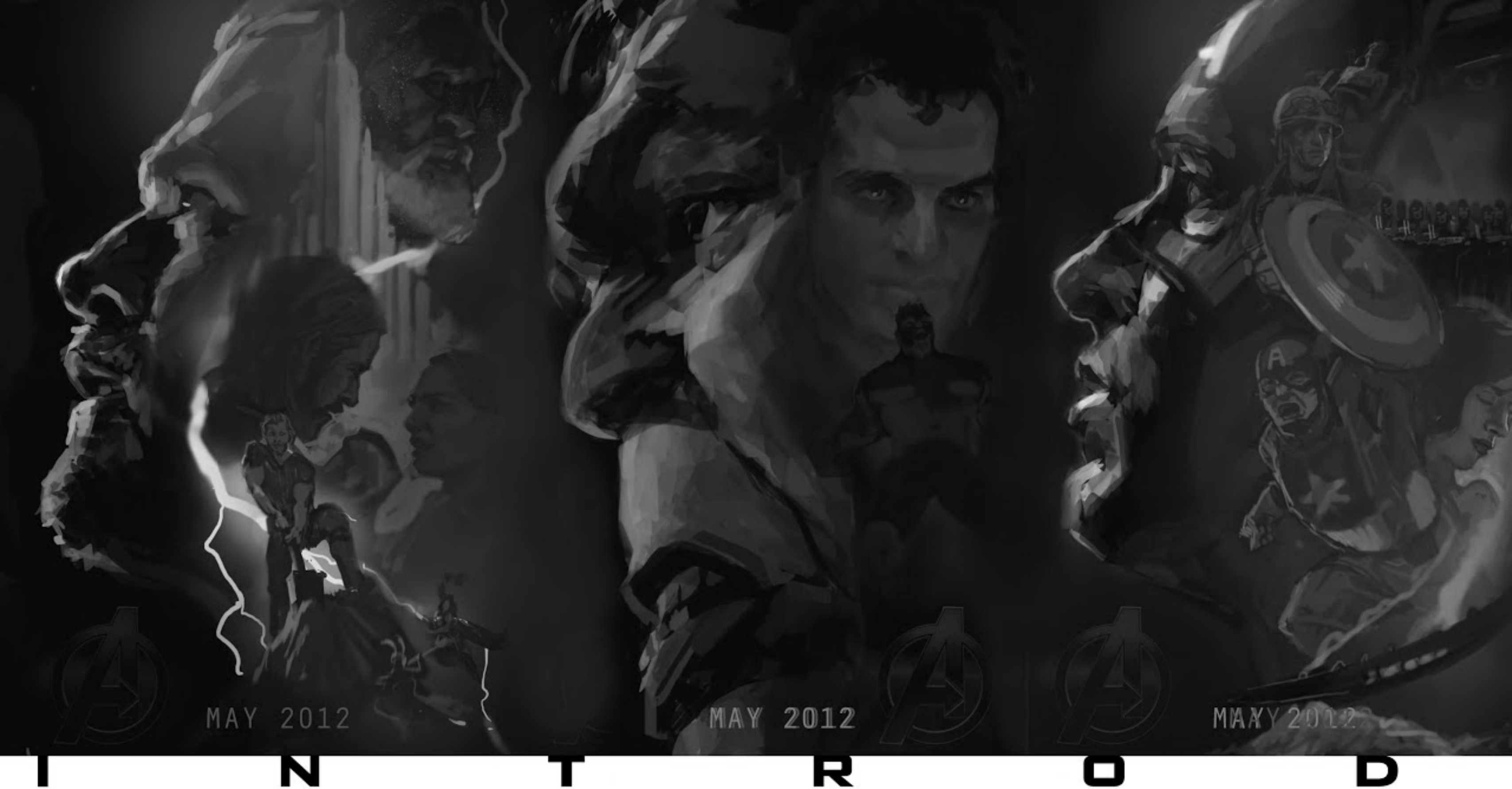
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Evolution: a word rooted in science, but an idea that transcends the bounds of biological advancement. Evolution is the core of the Marvel Cinematic Universe: a simple yet ever-changing notion, just like the characters after whom the stories are modeled. The necessity for evolution and continuity bred a new team comparable to the Avengers themselves—a team that would breathe life into these characters and their stories in a practical yet imaginative way, and ensure that the Marvel Cinematic Universe would retain the qualities that make Marvel's roster of characters so sensational. A product of conversations between President of Marvel Studios Kevin Feige, Co-President Louis D'Esposito, President of Post-Production Victoria Alonso, and artists

Ryan Meinerding and Charlie Wen, the team began work in early 2010 and only continues to expand with the addition of new properties.

"It's a very unique setup in the live-action film industry to have a group of consistent in-house artists for any given studio," Concept Artist Andy Park says. "But it makes sense for Marvel Studios, given their unprecedented move to create a cohesive universe amongst all their films—a move that has shaken the entire industry and is widely being adopted by all the other studios. We are here to help bring to life the iconic characters from the Marvel comic books and to maintain a consistency between each of the movies."

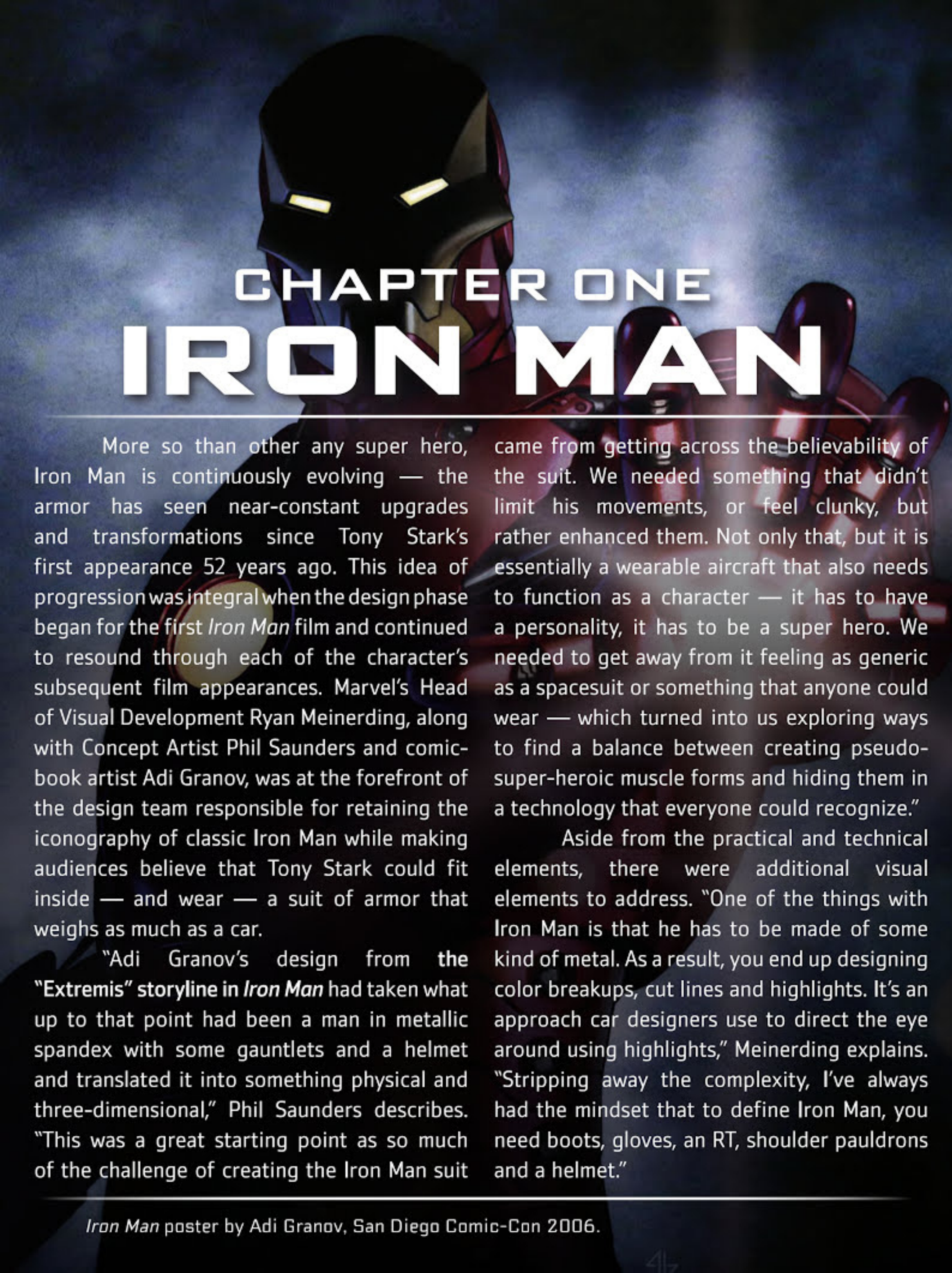
Head of Visual Development Ryan Meinerding echoes Park's



sentiment: "At Marvel, the directors and producers are in the trenches with the artists, working hard to find the best solutions possible. There is a very clear line of authorship for each design, and that in itself is a huge precedent in this business. In the book that follows, you will see the work that went into shaping the foundation of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Hopefully, it will be a fun journey from design to finished product, and you can feel the pride we all take in being part of the MCU."

Marvel's Visual Development Team is: Ryan Meinerding, Charlie Wen, Andy Park, Rodney Fuentebella, Jackson Sze, Josh Herman, Anthony Francisco, Josh Nizzi, Phil Saunders and Jacob Johnston.



A close-up of the Iron Man helmet and gauntlet, with the helmet's visor glowing yellow. The background is a dark, smoky blue.

CHAPTER ONE IRON MAN

More so than other any super hero, Iron Man is continuously evolving — the armor has seen near-constant upgrades and transformations since Tony Stark's first appearance 52 years ago. This idea of progression was integral when the design phase began for the first *Iron Man* film and continued to resound through each of the character's subsequent film appearances. Marvel's Head of Visual Development Ryan Meinerding, along with Concept Artist Phil Saunders and comic-book artist Adi Granov, was at the forefront of the design team responsible for retaining the iconography of classic Iron Man while making audiences believe that Tony Stark could fit inside — and wear — a suit of armor that weighs as much as a car.

"Adi Granov's design from the 'Extremis' storyline in *Iron Man* had taken what up to that point had been a man in metallic spandex with some gauntlets and a helmet and translated it into something physical and three-dimensional," Phil Saunders describes. "This was a great starting point as so much of the challenge of creating the Iron Man suit

came from getting across the believability of the suit. We needed something that didn't limit his movements, or feel clunky, but rather enhanced them. Not only that, but it is essentially a wearable aircraft that also needs to function as a character — it has to have a personality, it has to be a super hero. We needed to get away from it feeling as generic as a spacesuit or something that anyone could wear — which turned into us exploring ways to find a balance between creating pseudo-super-heroic muscle forms and hiding them in a technology that everyone could recognize."

Aside from the practical and technical elements, there were additional visual elements to address. "One of the things with Iron Man is that he has to be made of some kind of metal. As a result, you end up designing color breakups, cut lines and highlights. It's an approach car designers use to direct the eye around using highlights," Meinerding explains. "Stripping away the complexity, I've always had the mindset that to define Iron Man, you need boots, gloves, an RT, shoulder pauldrons and a helmet."







Ryan Meinerding concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.

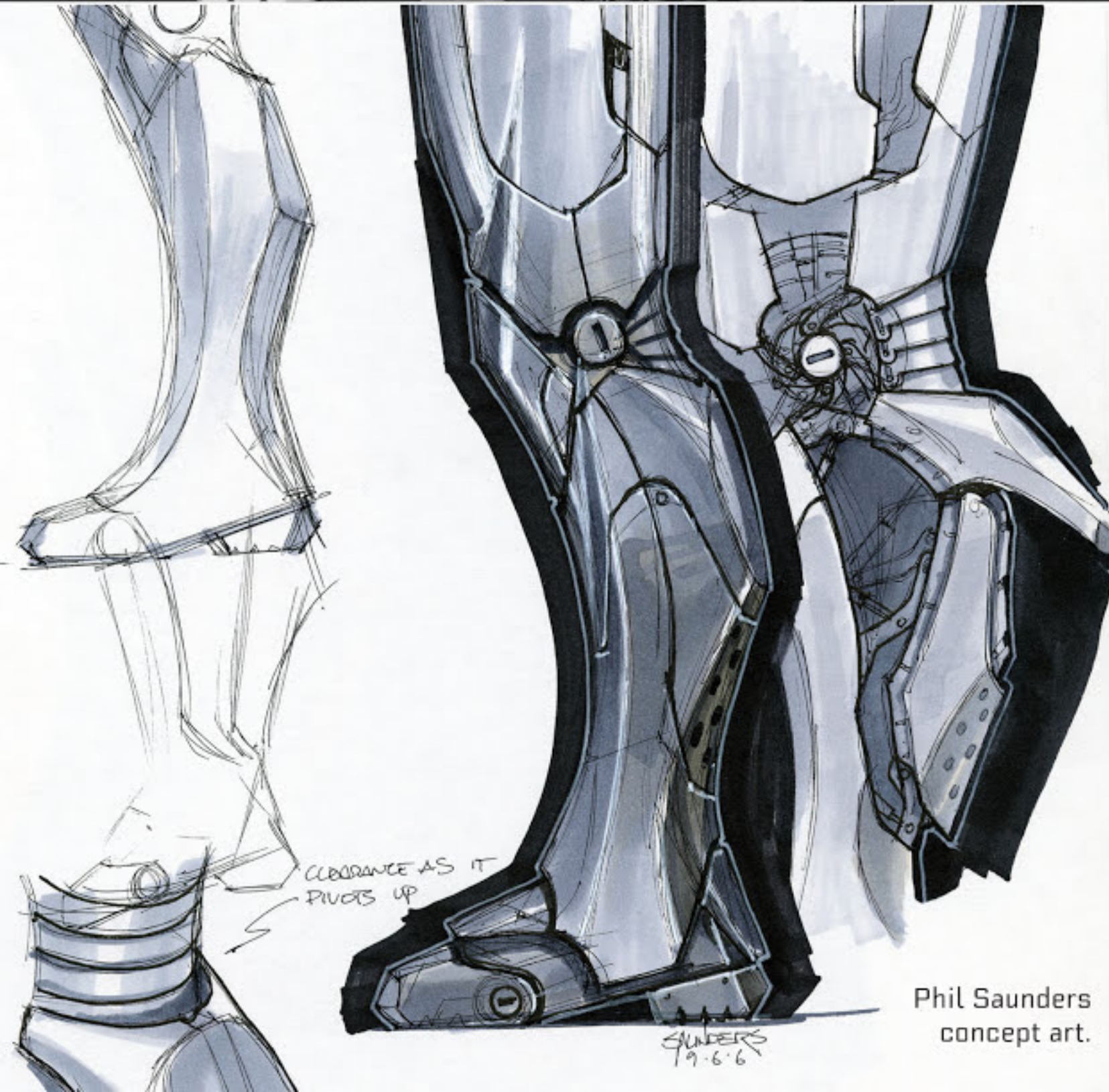
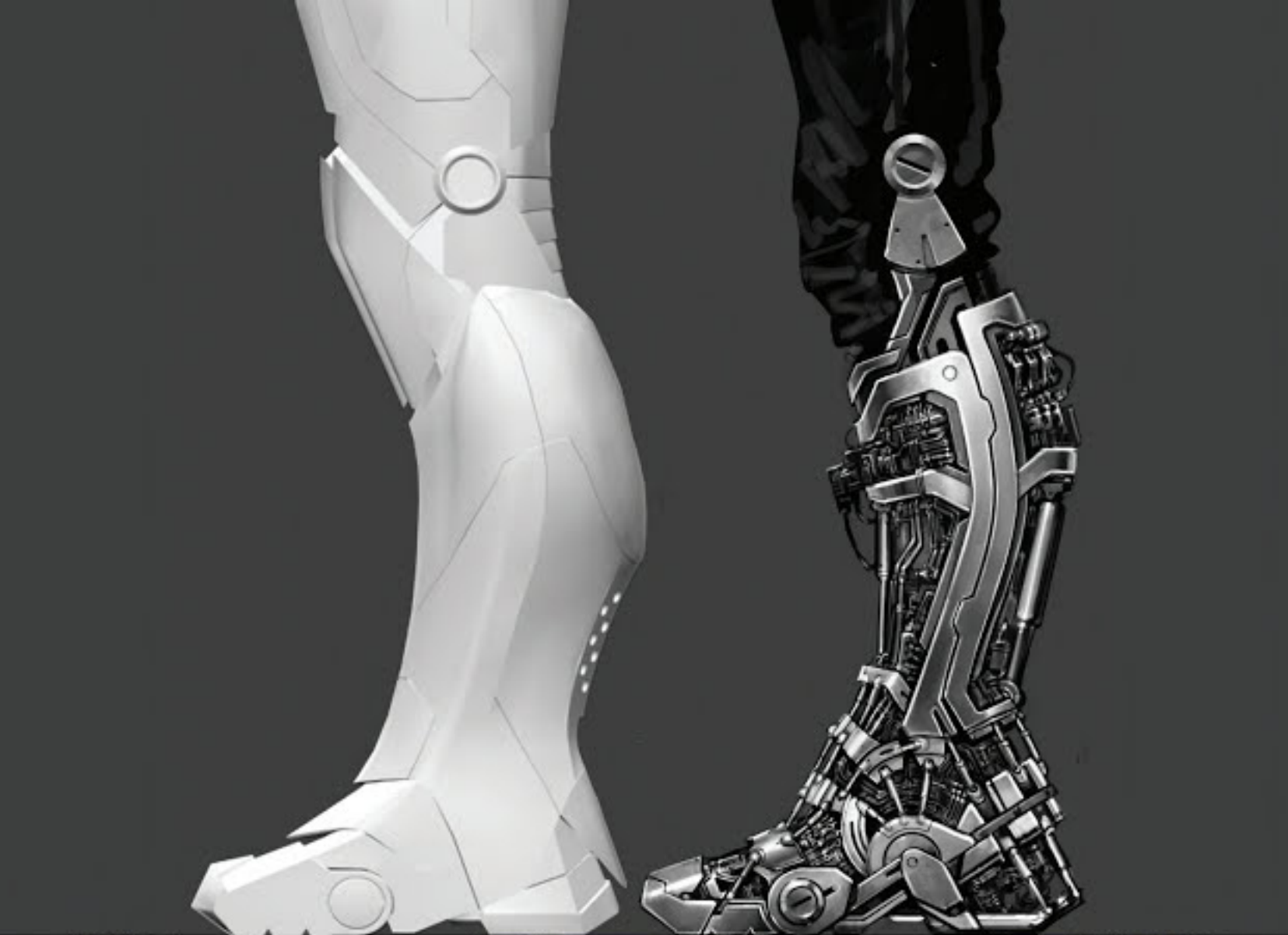


Ryan Meinerding concept art.

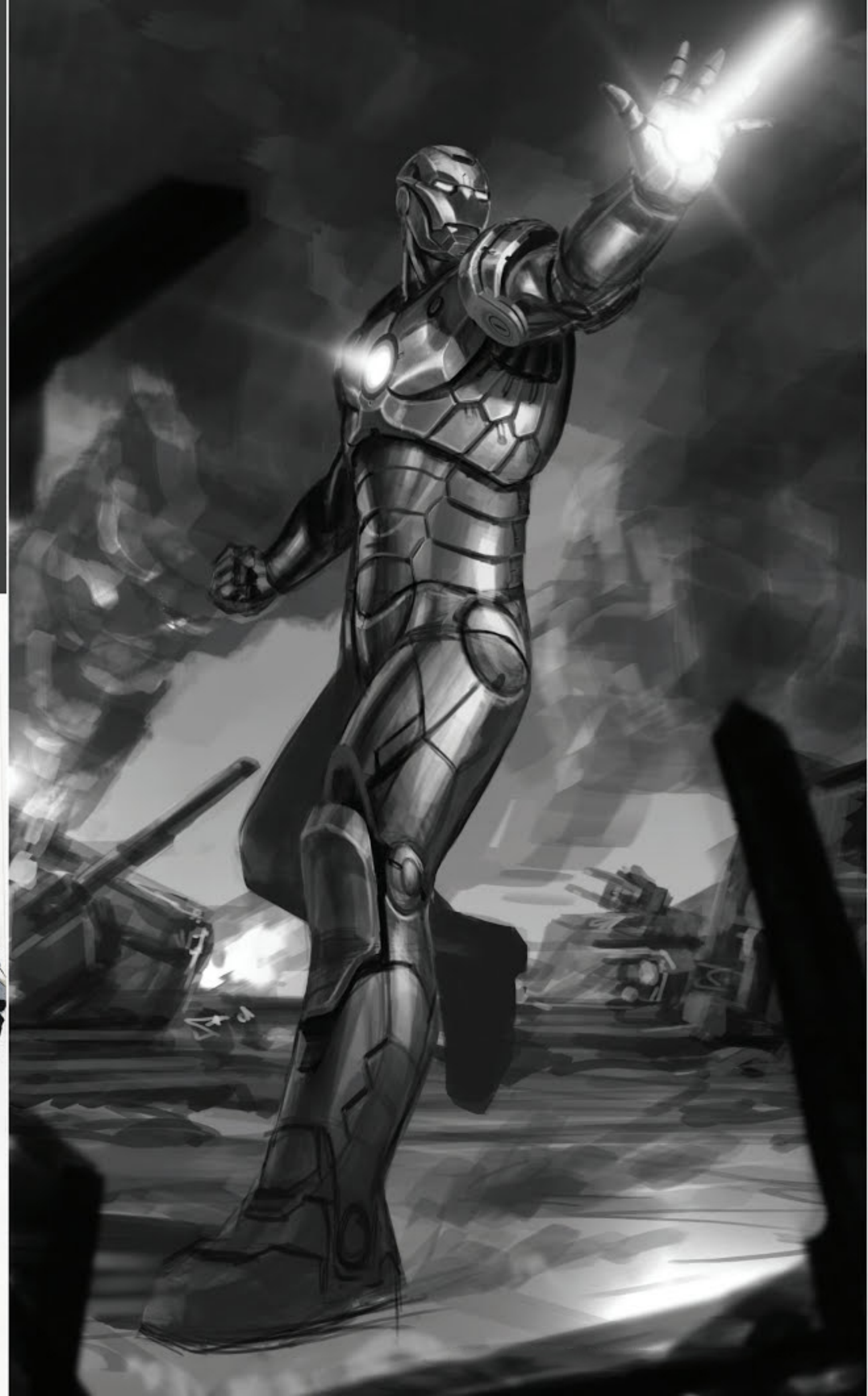


For Ryan Meinerding — and Tony Stark — it all began with the Mark I. While work on later suits was well underway, Meinerding immediately went to work on concept art for Stark's seminal suit of armor. His earliest renditions were grounded in the notion that the Mark I was assembled from the cave's "box of scraps." This was the one suit that would have to exemplify, more than any other, the extent of Stark's grit and resourcefulness.





Phil Saunders
concept art.







Ryan Meinerding keyframe.

Ryan Meinerding keyframe.

CHAPTER ONE: IRON MAN





Ryan Meinerding concept art.



The sleek Mark II armor — exemplified in Adi Granov's artwork — was Stark's first attempt to build an Iron Man suit in the comfort and capability of his own workshop. Phil Saunders' expertise from years in the automotive industry added a practical sensibility to the armor's highly reflective, organic surfaces. The armor, says Saunders, is intended to evoke a "Howard Hughes-like, maverick design prototype...the pure craftsmanship of an individual, not a product of mass industry."

Adi Granov concept art.



SAUNDERS



The Mark III was the first armor to begin the design process, with the predecessor suits reverse-engineered off its success. A long process of concept art began to piece together exactly how the iconic comic-book red-and-gold could be translated to the screen.

Phil Saunders concept art.



Rodolfo Damaggio
concept art.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.

Phil Saunders concept art.





Phil Saunders concept art.



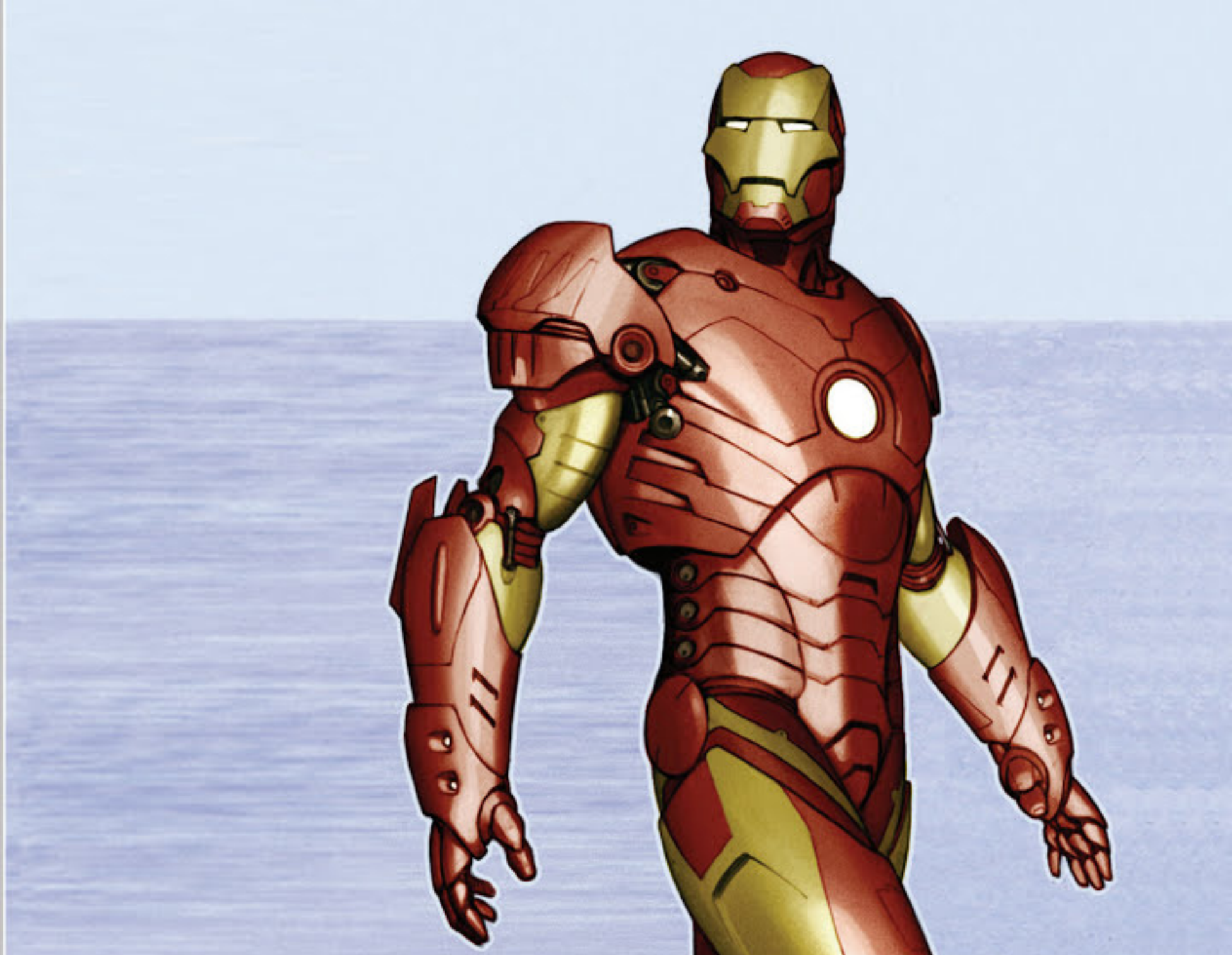
Early concept art from Phil Saunders was inspired by the classic comic-book armor, incorporating elements like the sleeveless turtleneck cowl and the gauntlets up to the mid-forearms.

Phil Saunders
concept art.

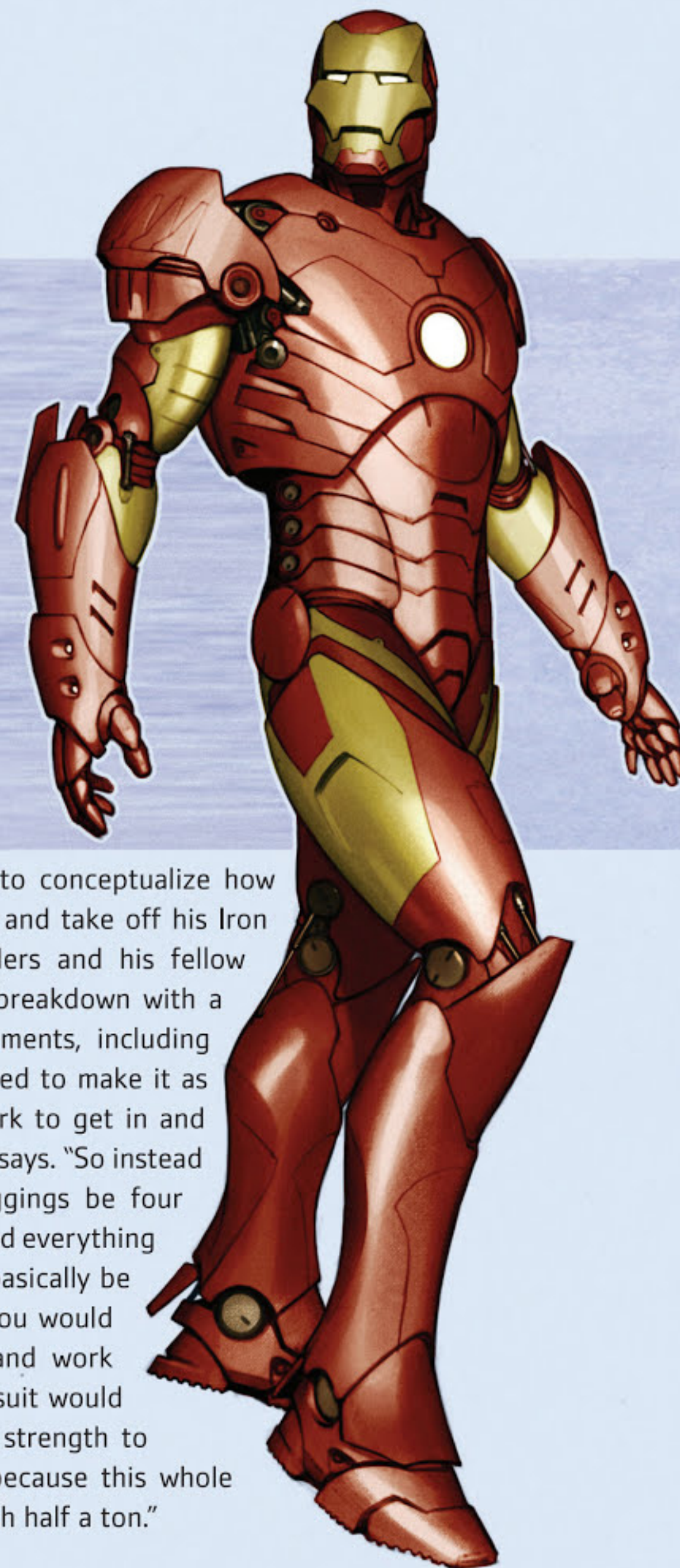


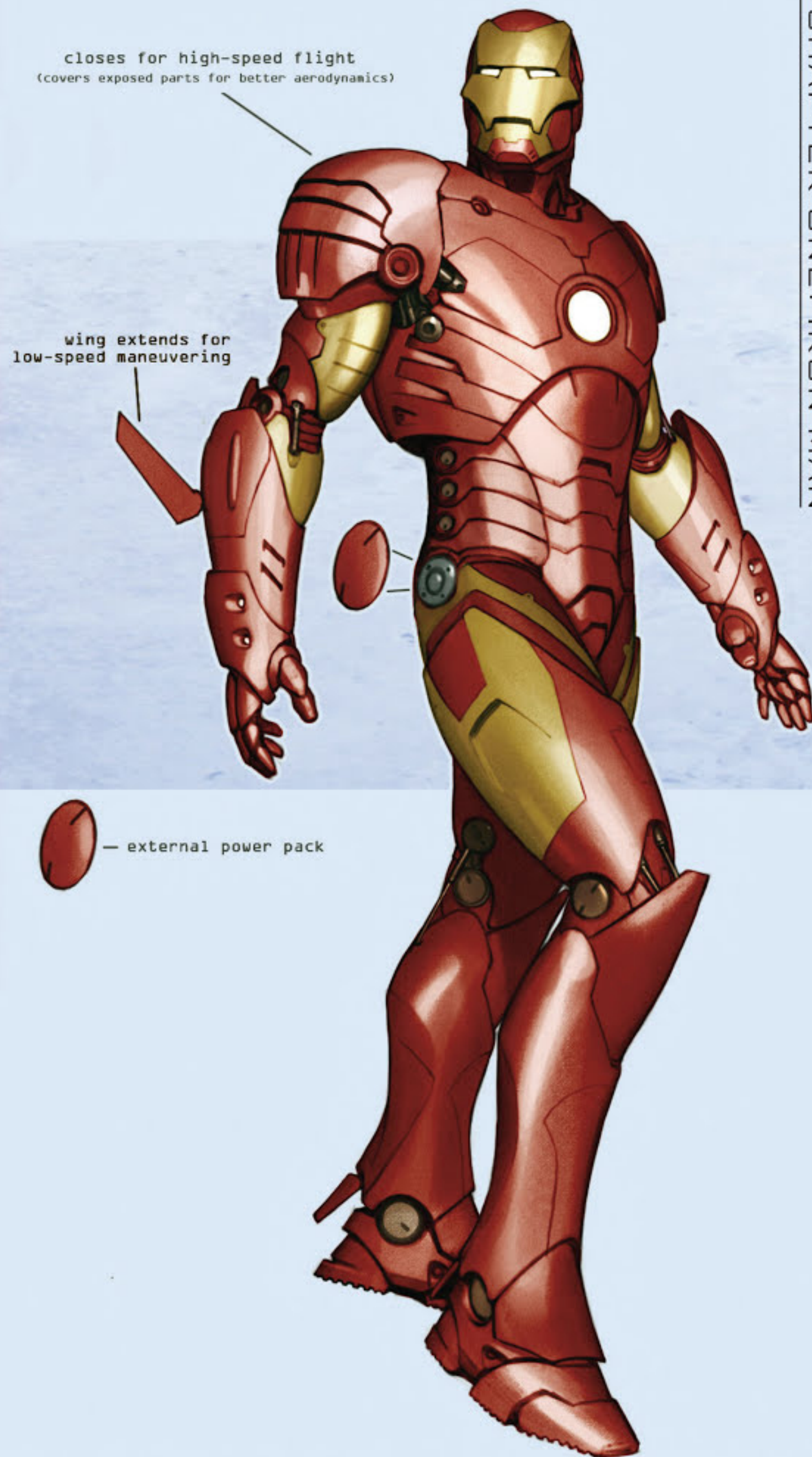
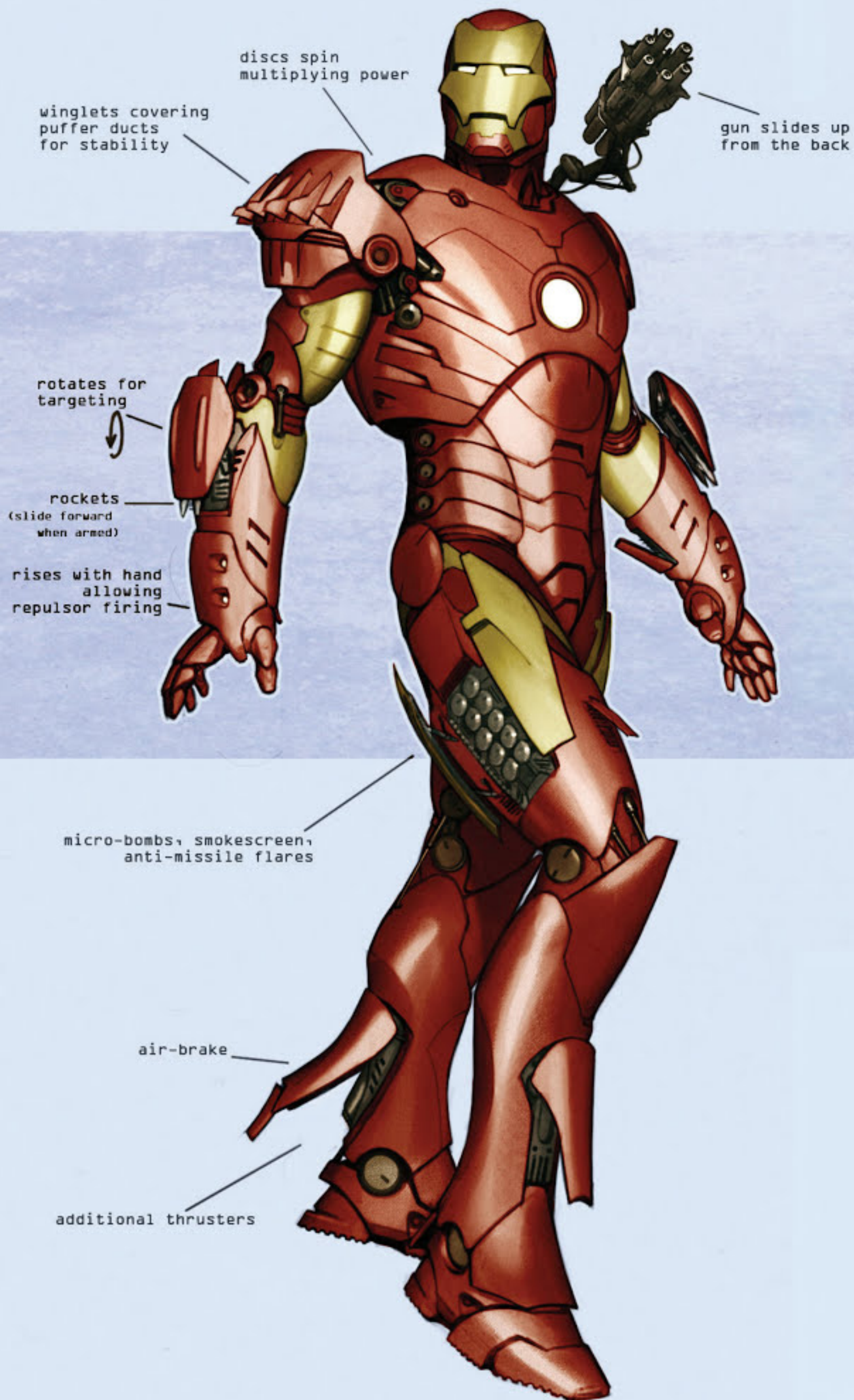


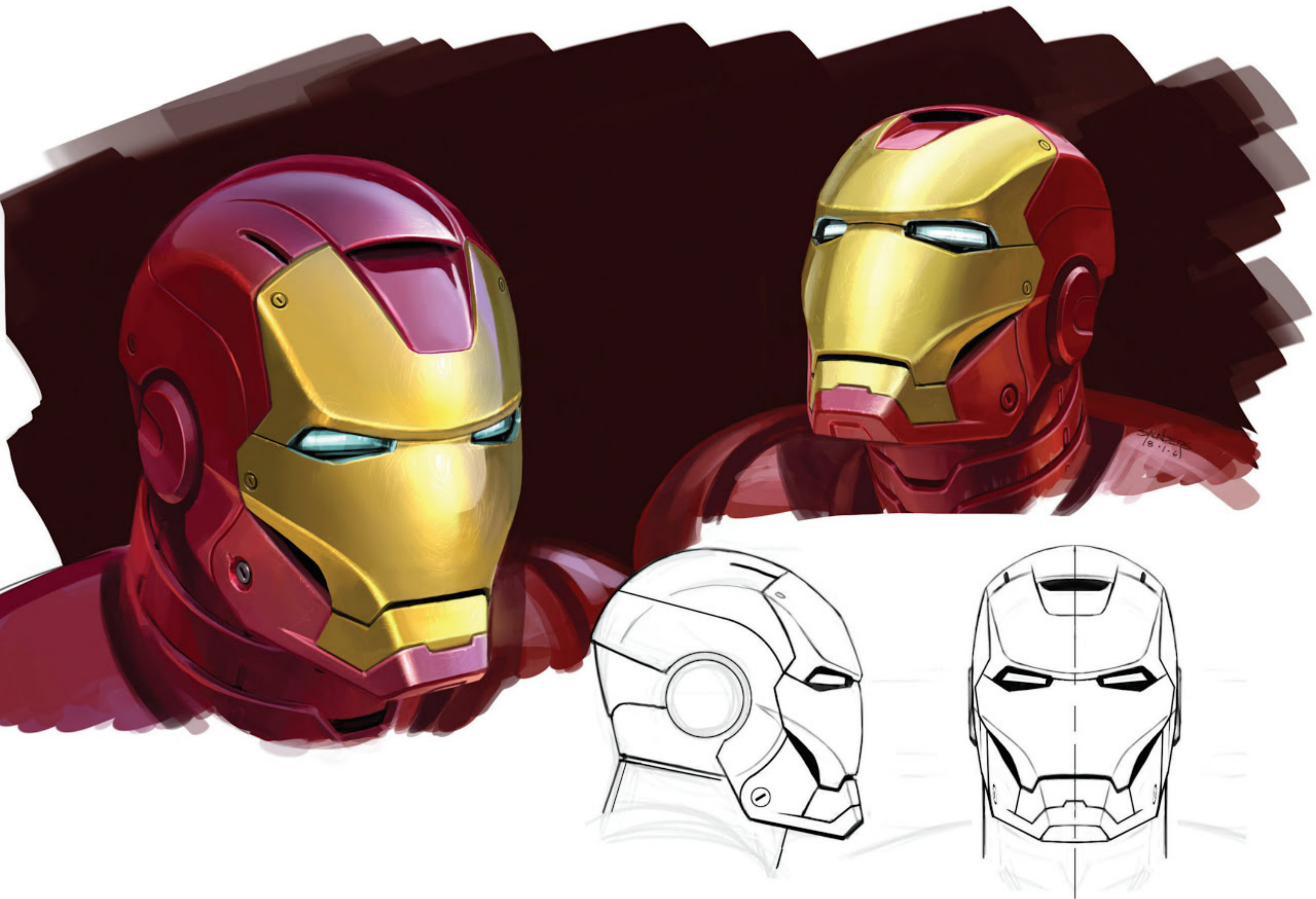
Phil Saunders concept art.



An early attempt to conceptualize how Tony Stark would put on and take off his Iron Man suit led Phil Saunders and his fellow illustrators to an armor breakdown with a minimum number of segments, including torso and legs. "We wanted to make it as quick as possible for Stark to get in and out of the suit," Saunders says. "So instead of having boots and leggings be four separate pieces, we wanted everything from the waist down to basically be a single, organic piece. You would start from the bottom and work your way up so that the suit would in fact give you enough strength to put the next piece on, because this whole thing is supposed to weigh half a ton."



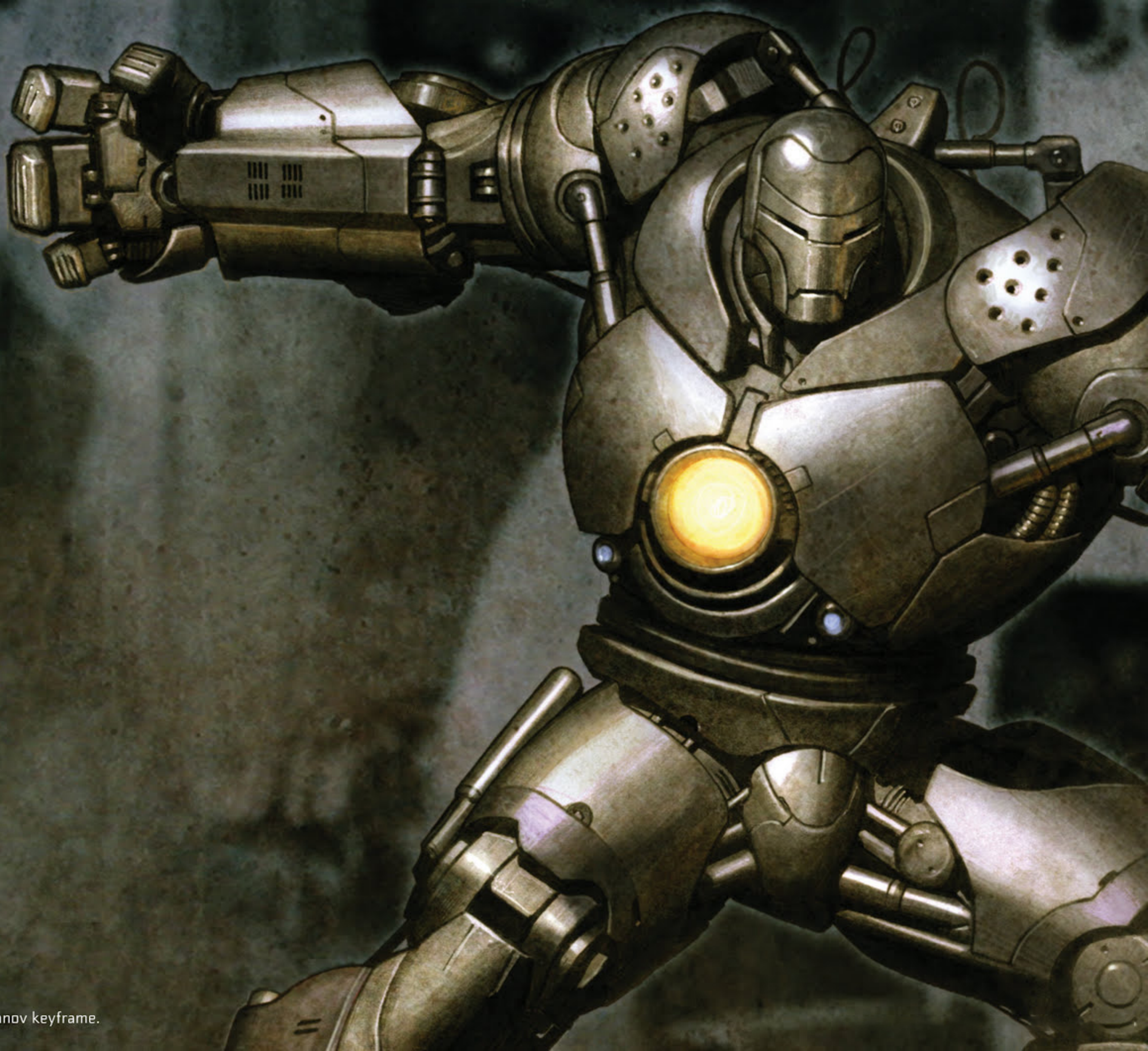


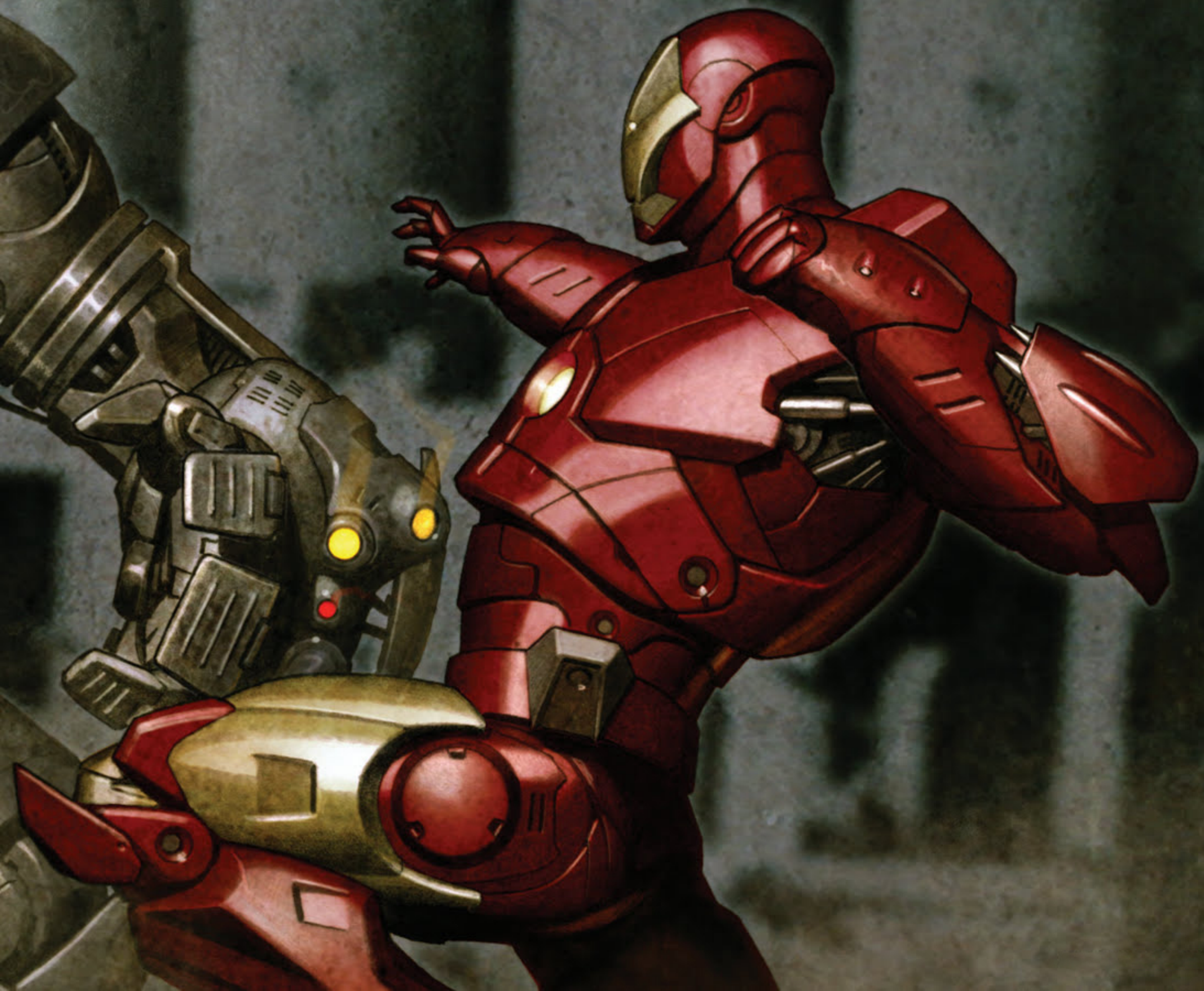


Concept art by Phil Saunders and Adi Granov.



To determine the final color choices for the Mark II and III armors, the crew at Stan Winston Studios applied various techniques to Designer Miles Tevis' helmet models to try to find the right balance of color that would work well in film.







Jonathan Bach concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.



Iron Man 2 introduced a classic comic-book conceit — the armor Stark keeps in his briefcase. Ryan Meinerding, Conceptual Illustrator on this film, recalls that making this Mark V armor believable was “somewhat challenging.” He elaborates, “We did a little bit of math, and the surface area that covers a body could actually fit into a case that’s not much bigger than a briefcase, so we can shove a little bit more mechanical bits in there and hopefully we can make it real.”



Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Legacy Effects concept art.

Ryan Meinerding
concept art.

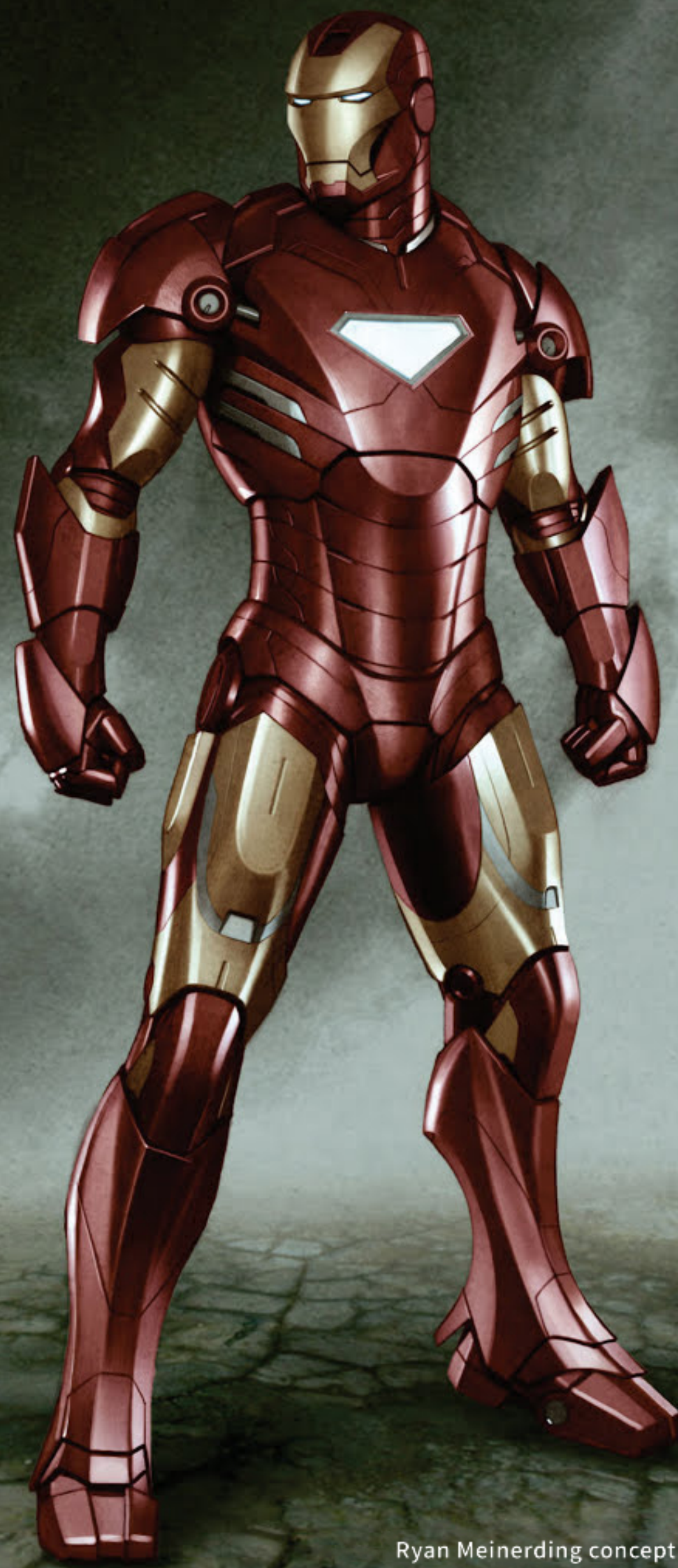


Technology marches on, and updated designs were inevitable for *Iron Man 2*. "If you look at it, you compare it side by side, it's sleeker, it fits better, it's more dynamic, and it's got more gadgets," Producer Kevin Feige says. "But it is iconically and unquestionably Iron Man."

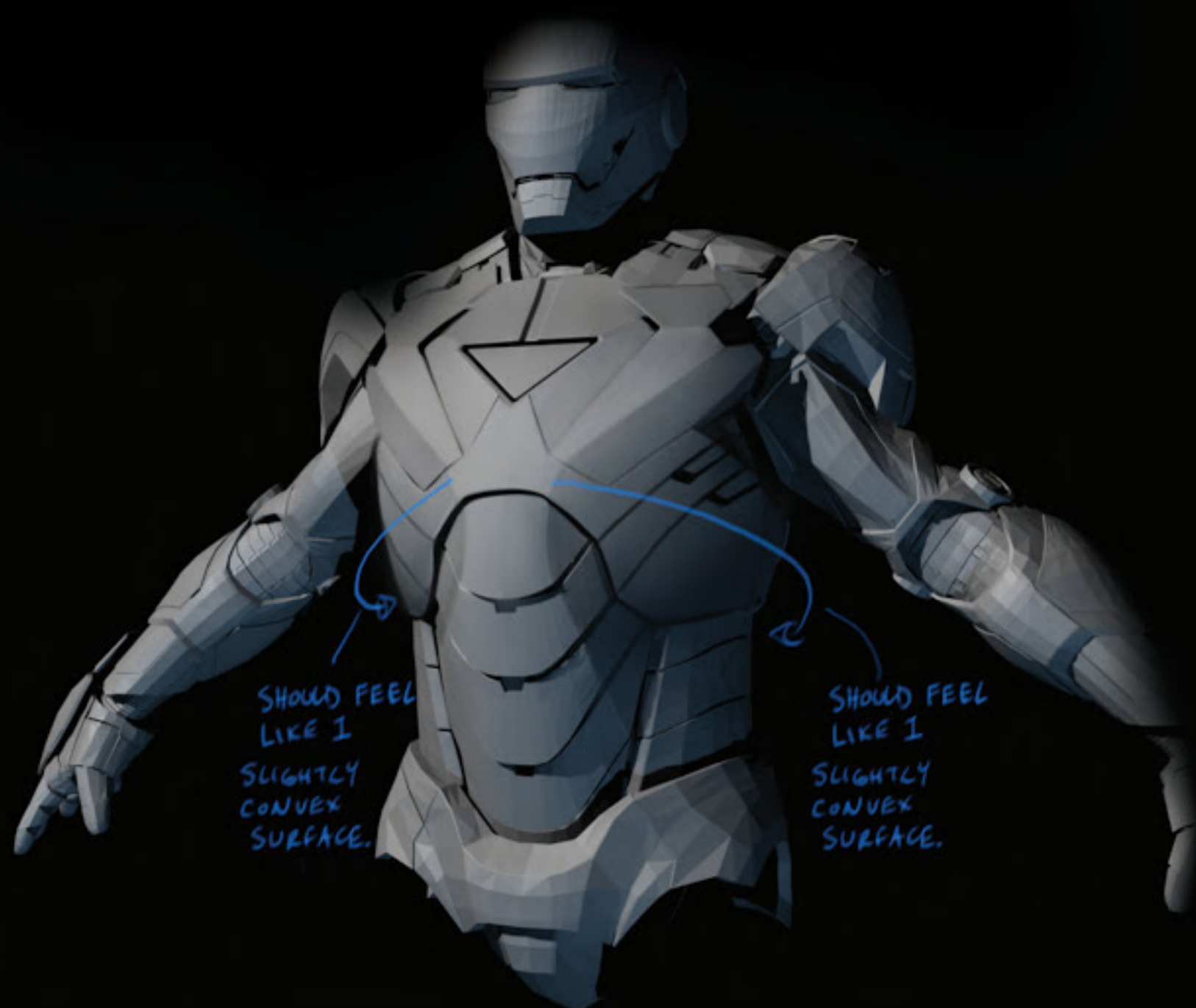




Adi Granov concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art



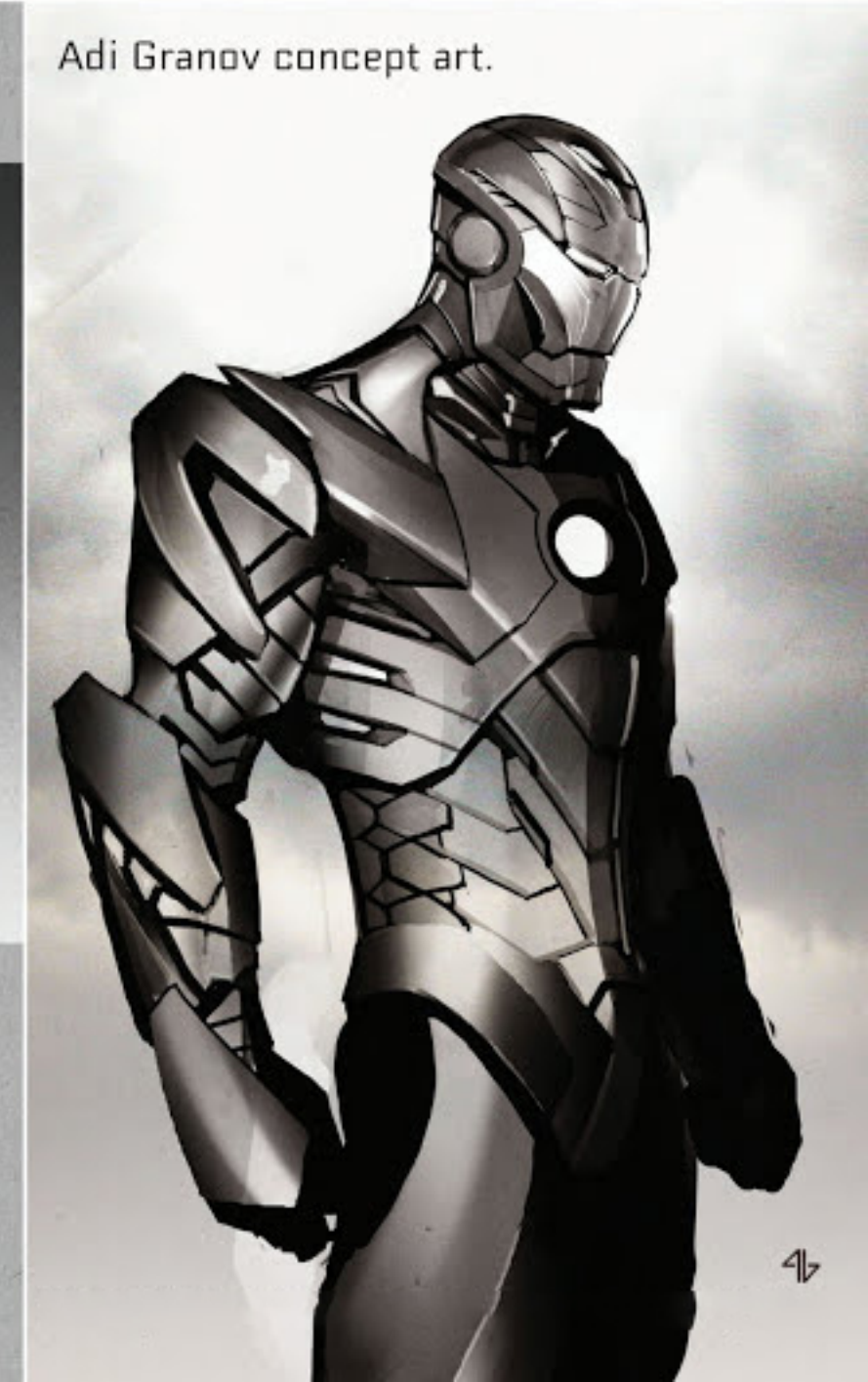
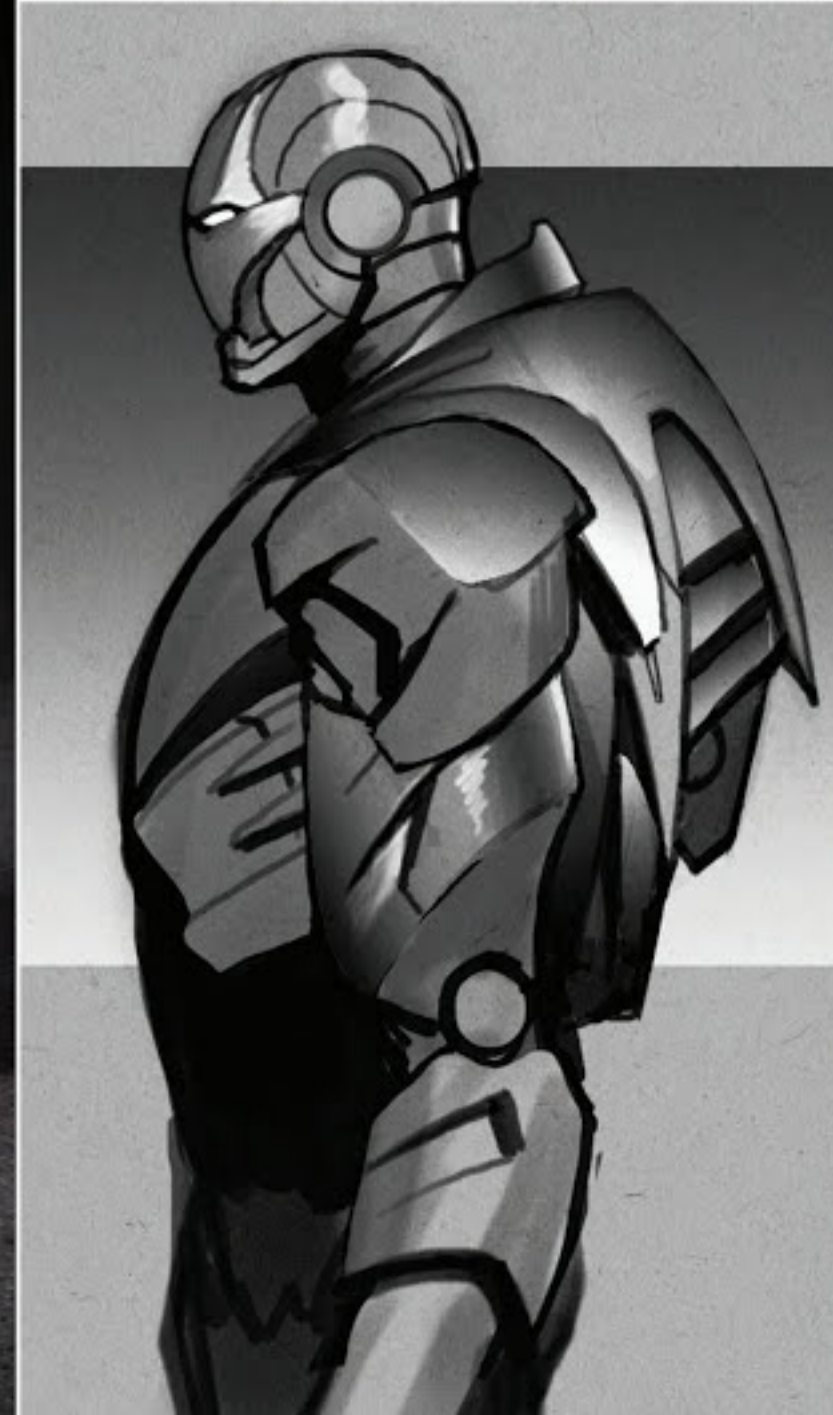
"The world calls it an arc reactor; we call it an RT, which is Repulsor Technology," Property Master Russell Bobbitt says of the chest piece that saved Tony Stark's life and powers the Iron Man armor. Tony's sickness in *Iron Man 2* led him to develop a new RT with the Mark VI armor, and the filmmakers wanted a very clear visual difference. "Switching it from circle to triangle just seemed to make the most sense," Ryan Meinerding says. "And it was the most iconic thing we could think to do."



Phil Saunders concept art.



Adi Granov concept art.







Adi Granov keyframe.





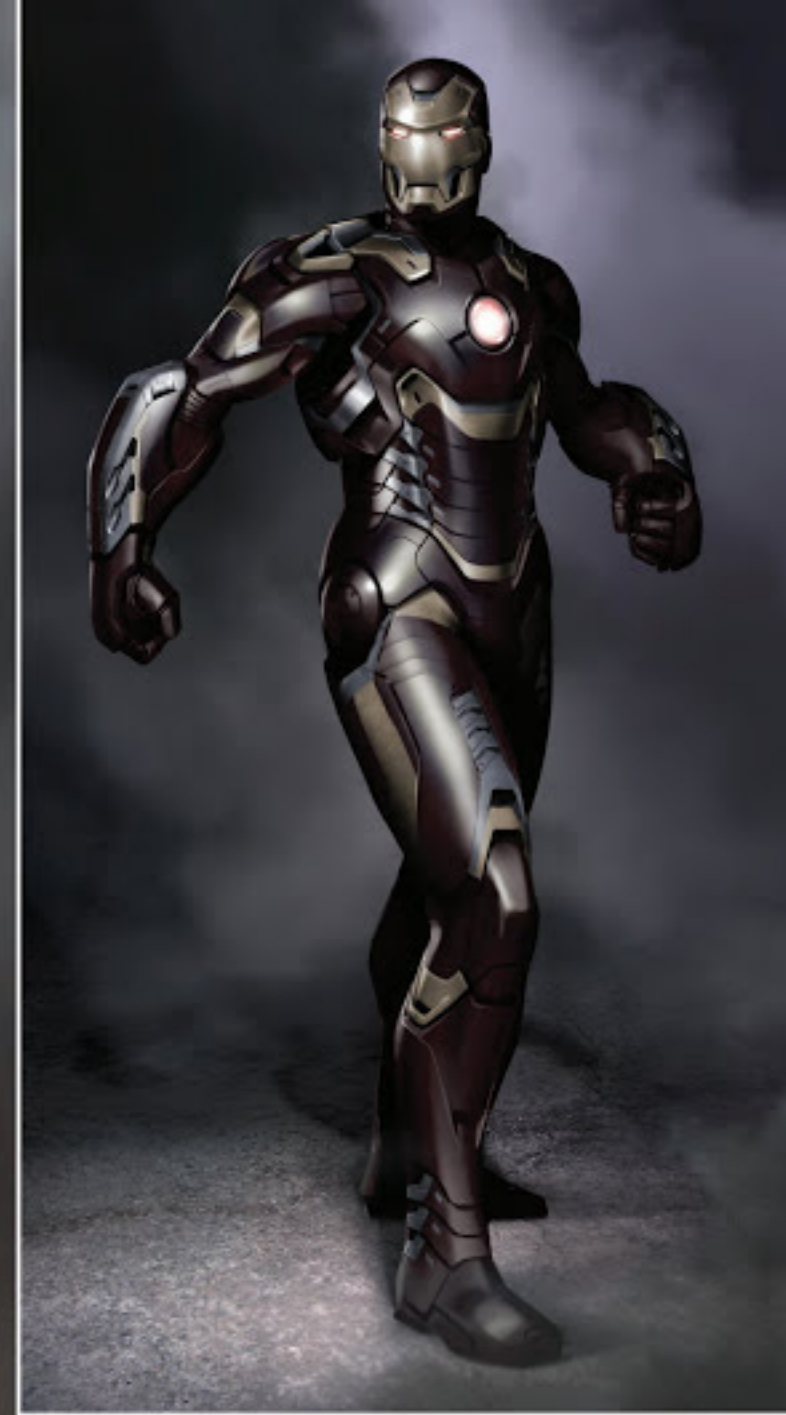
The chest circle returned in *Marvel's The Avengers*, courtesy of the Mark VII armor. Like most film designs, the souped-up suit began with the script, according to Phil Saunders. "There were

essentially two practical requirements for the suit," he says. "First, we needed to make a more powerful, heavily weaponized suit so Tony would be equipped to take on an army of aliens — but without taking

it to the tank-like proportions of War Machine. He still had to feel like Iron Man. The touchstone I kept in mind throughout the design process was to keep it looking like a 'wearable Ferrari.'"



Josh Herman digital model with additional details by Gregory Smith.



Phil Saunders concept art.



Rodney Fuentebella
concept art.



Rodney Fuentebella
concept art.



Rodney Fuentebella
concept art.



Adi Granov concept art.



Adi Granov concept art.







Rodney Fuentebella keyframe.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.



By the time *Iron Man 3* hit, Tony Stark had been busy creating a veritable army of armors. "The mandate was to create not just one armor, but a whole slew of armors that were going to appear in the movie," Concept Artist Andy Park says. "The Visual Development team consisted of six artists, and we spent a good month designing as many armors and armor types as we could with no real restrictions. We were in designer heaven."





Charlie Wen concept art.



Charlie Wen concept art.



Ryan Meinerding
concept art.



Ryan Meinerding
concept art.

Phil Saunders concept art.





Most visible in *Iron Man 3* is the Mark XLII suit. Ryan Meinerding, Visual Development Supervisor for this film, went for dramatic innovation in the new designs. “The previous suit designs — except for the Mark I and Mark V — were all fairly

reminiscent of the Mark III,” Meinerding says. “Director Shane Black and Marvel were interested in trying to find a new aesthetic — to hopefully mark a character change in Tony, as well as help communicate the suit’s prehensile capabilities. We had a challenging

time coming up with a design language that felt different. In the end, we changed the color proportions to where the suit is primarily gold with some of the gray metal understructure showing through.”





Josh Nizzi concept art.





"The Striker is Tony's rough and tough 'blue-collar' suit," Concept Artist Rodney Fuentebella says. "When designing it, I latched on to the idea that Tony has a working man's soul. I was inspired by construction equipment and how it's designed to do manual labor. The Striker suit is a side of Tony's ego that is raw, tough as nails and gets the job done."

rodney f

rodney f



Phil Saunders concept art.





Concept Artist Josh Nizzi turned to real-life science for inspiration: "The deep-space suit has small boosters all over the body, which control movement in zero gravity. Sections of heat-resistant tiles protect the suit during re-entry and make for a nice contrasting material. The gold-plated visor used by astronauts works perfectly with the iconic gold Iron Man face. We referenced materials and colors used in NASA vehicles and suits."

Josh Nizzi, concept art

"The Red Snapper suit is stronger, larger and more heavily armored than other suits — but lacks maneuverability, flight and weapons," Josh Nizzi says. "Unique to the Red Snapper are the powerful extendable claws that can reach out and crush just about anything."



Josh Nizzi concept art.





The fan-favorite Silver Centurion armor was the design Andy Park was "obsessed with as an adolescent." He elaborates, "*Iron Man #200* got me into comic books. I actually stopped collecting the book when the Silver Centurion armor got destroyed and he went back to the old red-and-gold color scheme. The hardest part to pull off was the drastically different bullet-head shape he had in the comic book."

Andy Park concept art.



Phil Saunders helped design Tony's deep-diving suit, intended, he says, "to work under the extreme pressures of the furthest depths of the ocean." Saunders adds, "What it loses in range of motion and maneuverability, it gains in incredible strength and near-invulnerability. It's effectively a wearable submarine, with the ability to extract oxygen from water for both long-term submersion and buoyancy control."



Phil Saunders concept art



Phil Saunders concept art.



Josh Nizzi concept art.

"Shane Black had the idea early on to have a hunchbacked suit," Ryan Meinerding recalls. "The design lent itself to be a heavy-lifting cargo suit that carried loads on his back. While Igor is not built for Hulkbusting, he is evidence that Tony is thinking about building larger and more powerful suits."



Ryan Meinerding concept art



Rodney Fuentebella concept art.

RODNEY



Another 1980s comic-book favorite was adapted for the big screen: the stealth armor. "If the Silver Centurion suit was the souped-up version, the Black Stealth suit is the trimmed-down, agile version," Andy Park says. "It is essentially his ninja suit down to the absence of a mouth, revealing only the eyes."



Andy Park
ANDYPARK

MARK 1



MARK 2



MARK 3



MARK 4



MARK 5



MARK 6



MARK 7



MARK 8



MARK 9



MARK 10



MARK 11



MARK 12



MARK 13



MARK 14



MARK 15

SNEAKY
STEALTH SUIT

MARK 16



MARK 17



MARK 18



MARK 19



MARK 20



MARK 21



MARK 22

NIGHTCLUB
BLACK STEALTH SUITHEARTBREAKER
ARTILLERY-LEVEL
RT SUITCASANOVA
STEALTH ARTILLERY-
LEVEL RT SUITTIGER
HIGH-VELOCITY
PROTOTYPE SUITPYTHON
LONG-DISTANCE SUITMIDAS
HIGH-ALTITUDE SUITHOT ROD
WAR MACHINE 2.0
PROTOTYPE

MARK 23


SHADES
EXTREME-HEAT SUIT

MARK 24


TANK
HEAVY-COMBAT SUIT

MARK 25


STRIKER
HEAVY-CONSTRUCTION
SUIT

MARK 26


GAMMA
HEAVY-CONSTRUCTION
SUIT UPGRADE

MARK 27


DISCO
CHAMELEON SUIT

MARK 28


JACK
RADIATION-ZONE SUIT

MARK 29


FIDDLER
NIMBLE-CONSTRUCTION
SUIT

MARK 30


BLUE STEEL
SILVER CENTURION
SUIT UPGRADE

MARK 31


PISTON
HIGH-VELOCITY
CENTURION SUIT

MARK 32


ROMEO
ENHANCED-RT SUIT

MARK 33


SILVER CENTURION
ENHANCED-ENERGY SUIT

MARK 34


SOUTHPAW
DISASTER-RESCUE
SUIT PROTOTYPE

MARK 35


RED SNAPPER
DISASTER-RESCUE SUIT

MARK 36


PEACEMAKER
RIOT-CONTROL SUIT

MARK 37


HAMMERHEAD
DEEP-SEA SUIT

MARK 38


IGOR
HEAVY-LIFTING SUIT

MARK 39


STARBOOST
SUBORBITAL SUIT

MARK 40

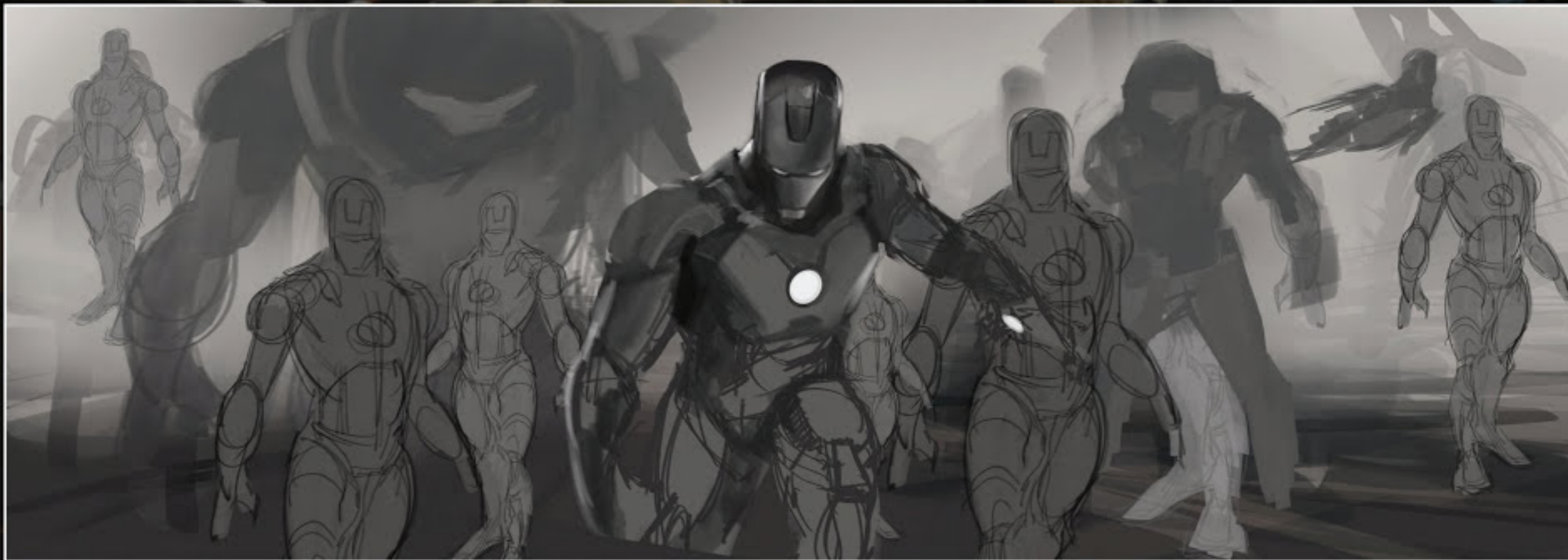

SHOTGUN
HIGH-VELOCITY SUIT

MARK 41


BONES
SKELETON SUIT

MARK 42


PREHENSILE SUIT





rodney.f



Ryan Meinerding keyframe.





CHAPTER TWO

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Boasting arguably the most garish getup of the Avengers roster, Steve Rogers — better known as Captain America — has undergone a design phase spanning more than 70 years. Crucially, the focus of *Captain America: The First Avenger* on Steve Rogers' incredible journey from frail teenager to super-soldier gave the Visual Development team the ideal opportunity to fashion a suit truly built for the rigors of war. "For *The First Avenger*, I was always just looking at different uniforms and gear that soldiers would wear and transitioning the same distinguishing line work into a look for Cap that felt functional for what types of missions he would be doing," Head of Visual Development Ryan Meinerding says. "I'm always trying to design him leading with his chest, standing proud, and also finding ways to broaden his shoulders."

After Captain America's sacrifice puts him on ice for the next few decades, he is brought into a world much different than the one he left behind. That world, however, still demands a hero — a natural-born soldier and a leader for the Avengers. "Moving into *Marvel's The Avengers*, that design was really dictated by [Writer/Director] Joss Whedon's decision to make Cap feel the most 'super hero' of the rest of

the team. I think he saw the chance with Captain America to really make it feel like a super-hero movie, go back to the comic roots: unabashedly bright, colorful and iconic."

In the wake of *Marvel's The Avengers*, Captain America solidifies his place among the ranks of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s best agents. His new role leads him into black-ops-style missions that sometimes come in conflict with his beliefs. "The stealth suit for *Winter Soldier* was born from going back to the conversations about functionality, but in a more modern context. We stripped away the stars and stripes, and really focused on selling the idea of him doing these black-ops missions — making him feel a bit out of place, taking away the symbolism, the foundation of the morality his first iteration of his costume represented. That's why at the end of the film, it was pertinent that he steal back the original suit from the Smithsonian to stand as more than just a leader, but also a symbol," Meinerding says. "Even though they seem very different, all of the iterations of the Cap costume feature a vertical pattern on the abdomen and a star central on the chest. That's really the template we've always used and for good reason — it keeps him feeling like the character from the comics."



Instead of fighting on the front lines as he expected, Rogers first unwittingly finds himself becoming an exaggerated symbol for his nation, a propaganda tool touring USO camps.

"Captain America is one of the most iconic, one of the most famous, well-known characters in the Marvel canon," Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige says. "I would say he's right up there with Spider-Man — his being well-known; his being beloved; his being an iconic piece of comicdom, of Americana."

To make Captain America's journey a visual one with which audiences could identify, the filmmakers were tasked with developing several different looks for their title character. The first of Cap's many uniforms is his USO costume — in which he is very much the "Star-Spangled Man" his backup singers celebrate in the film's catchy stage song.



Ryan Meinerding keyframe.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.





The conceit of the USO stage show allowed filmmakers to justify Captain America's classic vibrant costume from the comic books. Ryan Meinerding, Visual Development Supervisor on the film, says, "The USO suit is basically an unadulterated version of Captain America's suit. I think in the making it ended up going a little bit goofier than I expected it to, but it probably works for the film 'cause he's meant to come to sort of despise what he's going through in that particular stage."

Mauro Borelli concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.





As the film progresses, Captain America soon becomes frustrated with his role as a mere mascot and embarks on a rescue mission despite the orders of his commanding officer. And since the flashy USO costume isn't a feasible choice of outfit for real-world combat situations, the Visual Development Department was charged with designing a new uniform for Cap — one equal parts patriotic and practical. RM

Ryan Meinerding concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.



Ryan Meinerding and fellow Concept Artist Charlie Wen — later Marvel's joint Heads of Visual Development — looked to comic-book source material for Captain America's initial wartime costume, including 2002 series *The Ultimates* illustrated by Bryan Hitch. "Looking at what Bryan Hitch did was a big source of inspiration," Meinerding says. "We definitely took the idea of Cap's cowl being a helmet with a chinstrap, and incorporating webbing and gear, from *The Ultimates*. Bryan Hitch's designs do a lot of the same things that we try and do: add 20 percent more reality to the classic costumes. We were trying to combine those practical concepts with the classic Kirby Cap."





When it came to designing Cap's final suit in the first film, Ryan Meinerding says a sense of realism was important. He and his fellow artists sought to take the iconic silhouette that Captain America co-creator Jack Kirby designed and find a way to make that fit in the real world. "Captain America's costume has an unabashedly extreme quality to it," he says. "It's red, white and blue, and proudly boasts stars and stripes. For those of us that love the character, that iconic, strong visual is part of what makes Cap so close to our hearts. We tried our hardest to keep that icon while allowing those not as familiar with the character to find him cool and appealing, and not just shut down at the sight of such a powerfully poignant comic image. Relating his costume to a soldier's gear was a big step, and trying to use materials that would feel advanced for the 1940s was another part of that."



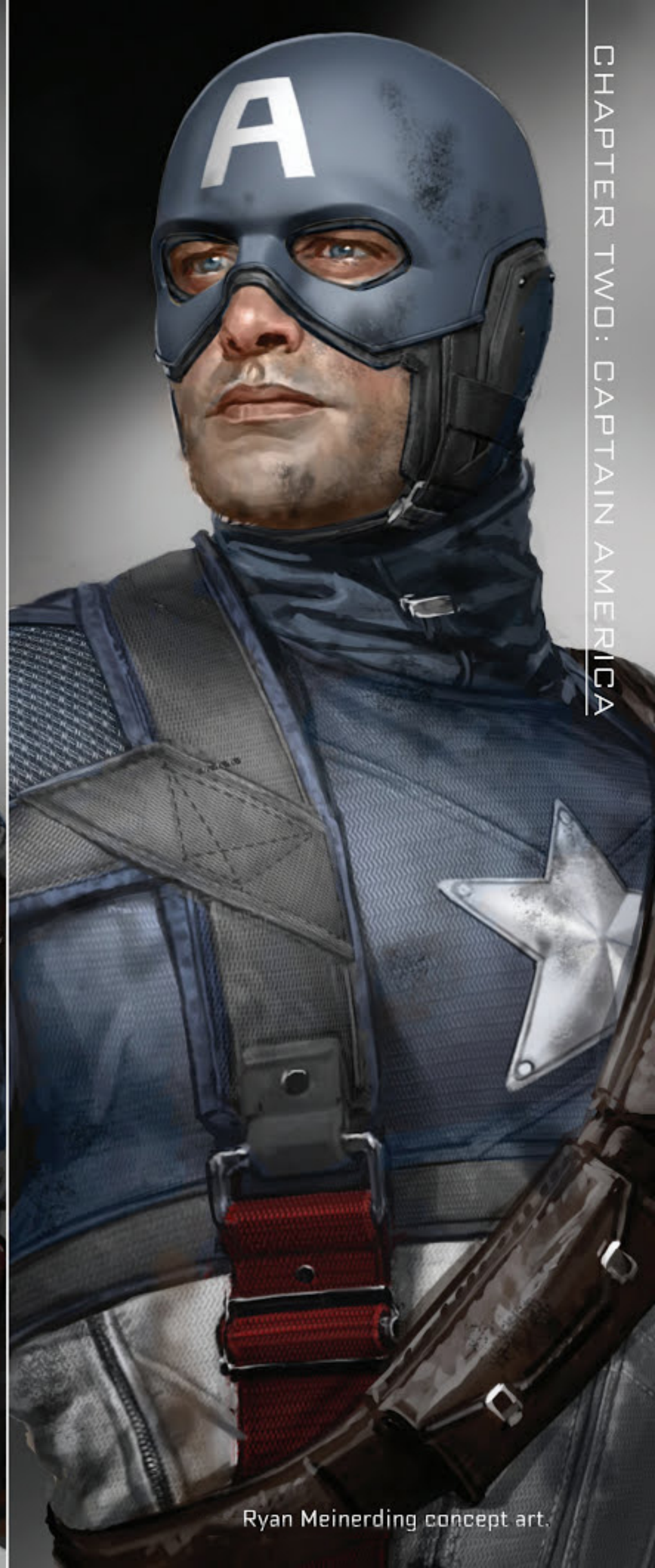
Ryan Meinerding concept art.

Ryan Meinerding concept art.





RM
Ryan Meinerding concept art.



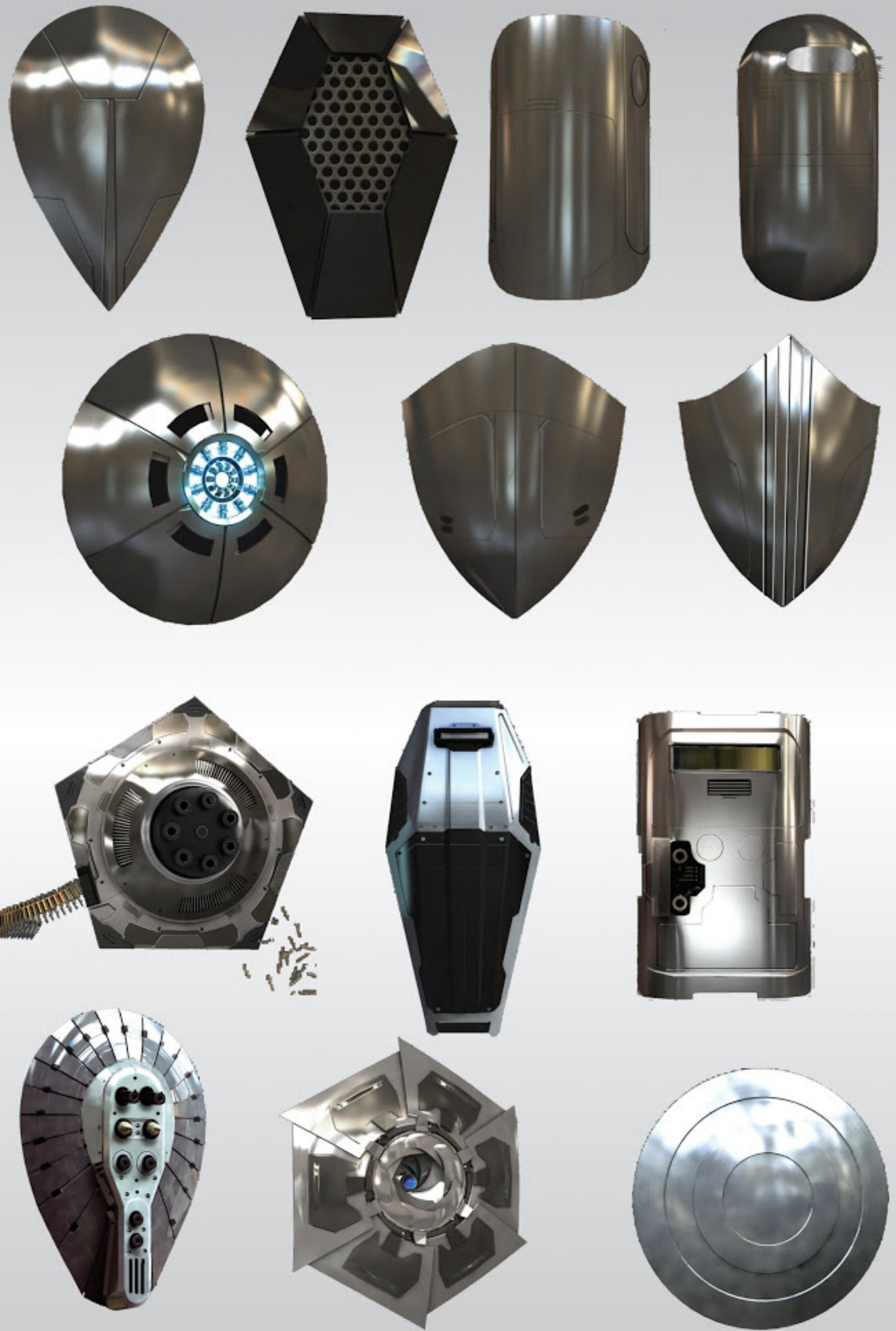
In WWII, soldiers often had identifiable symbols painted on their helmets. Cap's signature wings offer a grounding in the period.



Ryan Meinerding concept art.



When the Army finally decides to put Captain America's unique talents to good use, Howard Stark designs a variety of prototype shields for Steve Rogers before stumbling upon the perfect model. The result is a seeming contradiction that combines both simplicity and advanced technology.





Captain America's uniform may be important, but as any comic-book fan will tell you, it's the shield that makes the man. Cap's weapon of choice, used both offensively and defensively, is arguably the film's most important prop. "The team that worked with me took the initial designs that came from back in 1942, and we extended them," Property Master Barry Gibbs says. "We adapted it to modern times. Effectually, it went from a very plain shield to something that's kind of a little bit more high-tech."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.

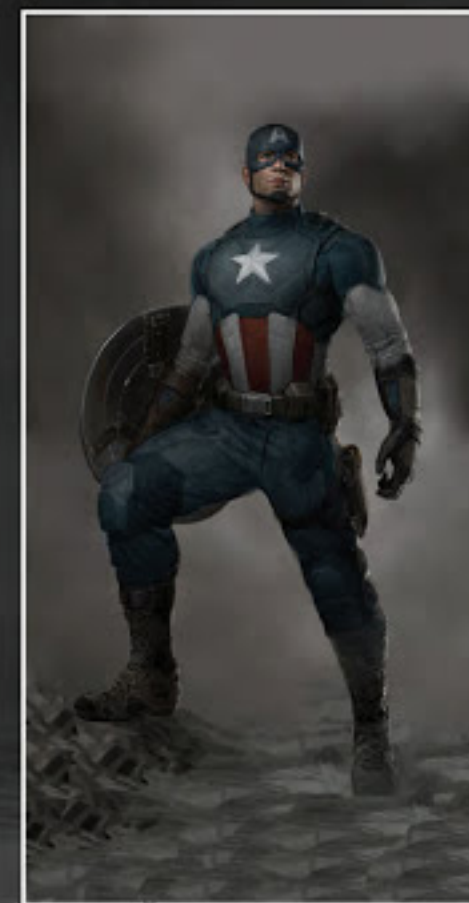


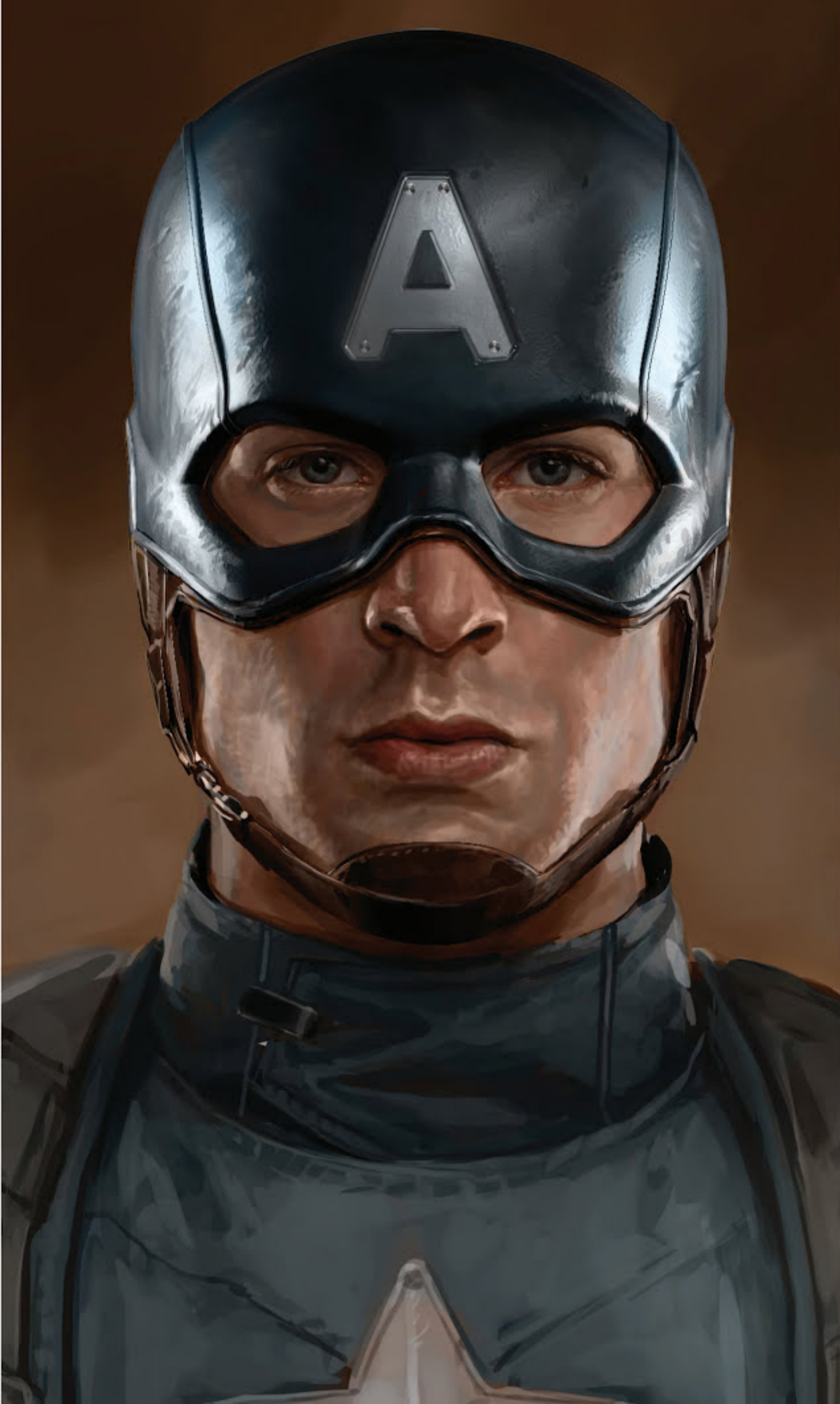
RM



"The fabric for the suit is basically a ballistic nylon, which in fact is a heavy-duty woven nylon with a rubberized backing," Suit Modeler Paddy Whitaker explains. "It comes from a firm in the U.K., and we believe it's used for the manufacturing of horse blankets. The fabric is actually quite strong, more like a heavy denim or canvas. I also knew that nailing the right blue was going to be a big issue with the Cap suit. We actually chose a gray fabric quite deliberately because we knew that we could then push into various different blues and take it from there."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.







Andy Park keyframes with sketch.





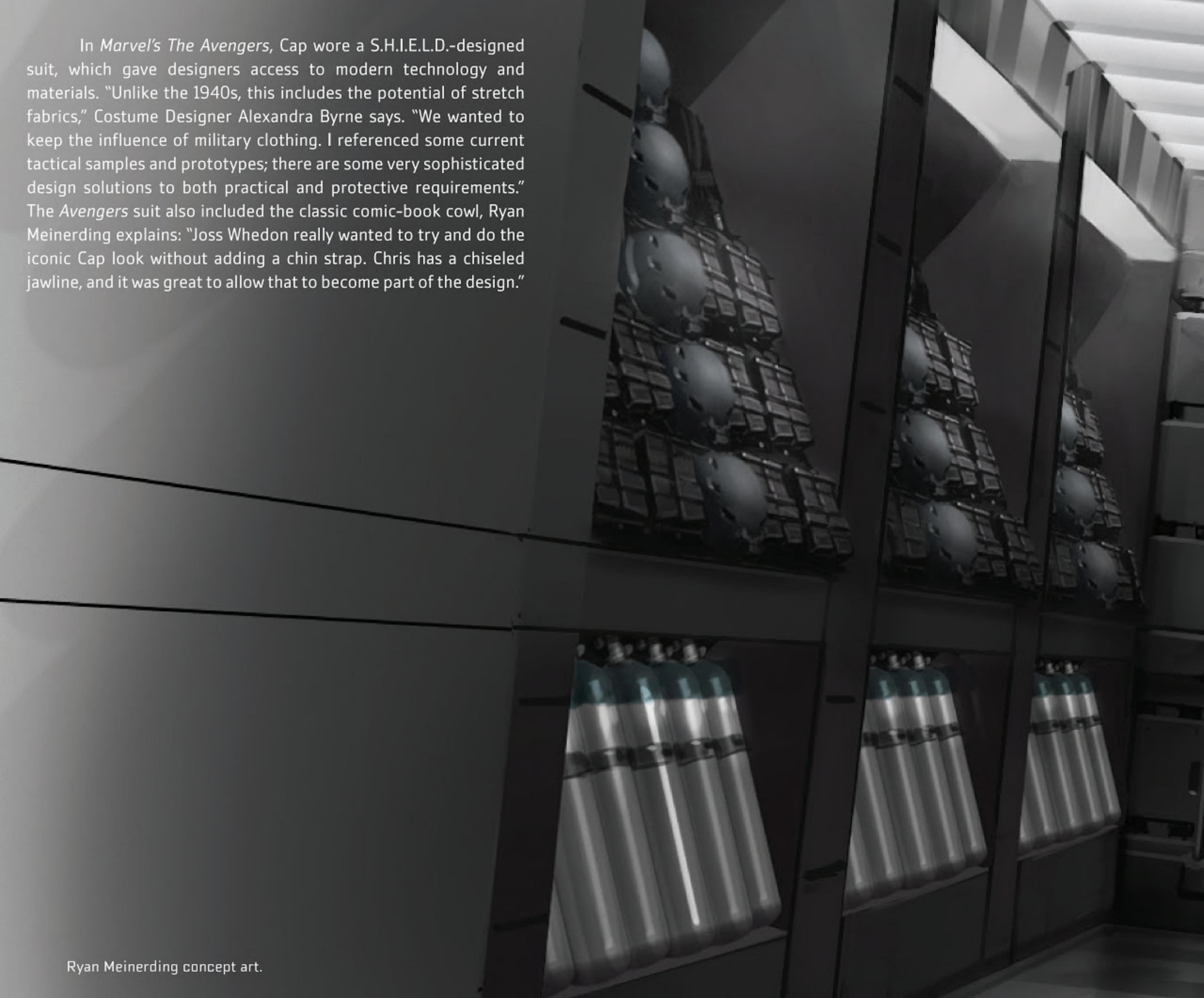






The Life and Impact of America's Greatest Soldier

In *Marvel's The Avengers*, Cap wore a S.H.I.E.L.D.-designed suit, which gave designers access to modern technology and materials. "Unlike the 1940s, this includes the potential of stretch fabrics," Costume Designer Alexandra Byrne says. "We wanted to keep the influence of military clothing. I referenced some current tactical samples and prototypes; there are some very sophisticated design solutions to both practical and protective requirements." The *Avengers* suit also included the classic comic-book cowl, Ryan Meinerding explains: "Joss Whedon really wanted to try and do the iconic Cap look without adding a chin strap. Chris has a chiseled jawline, and it was great to allow that to become part of the design."







Charlie Wen concept art.



Andy Park concept art.



Adi Granov concept art.



Ryan Meinerding
concept art.



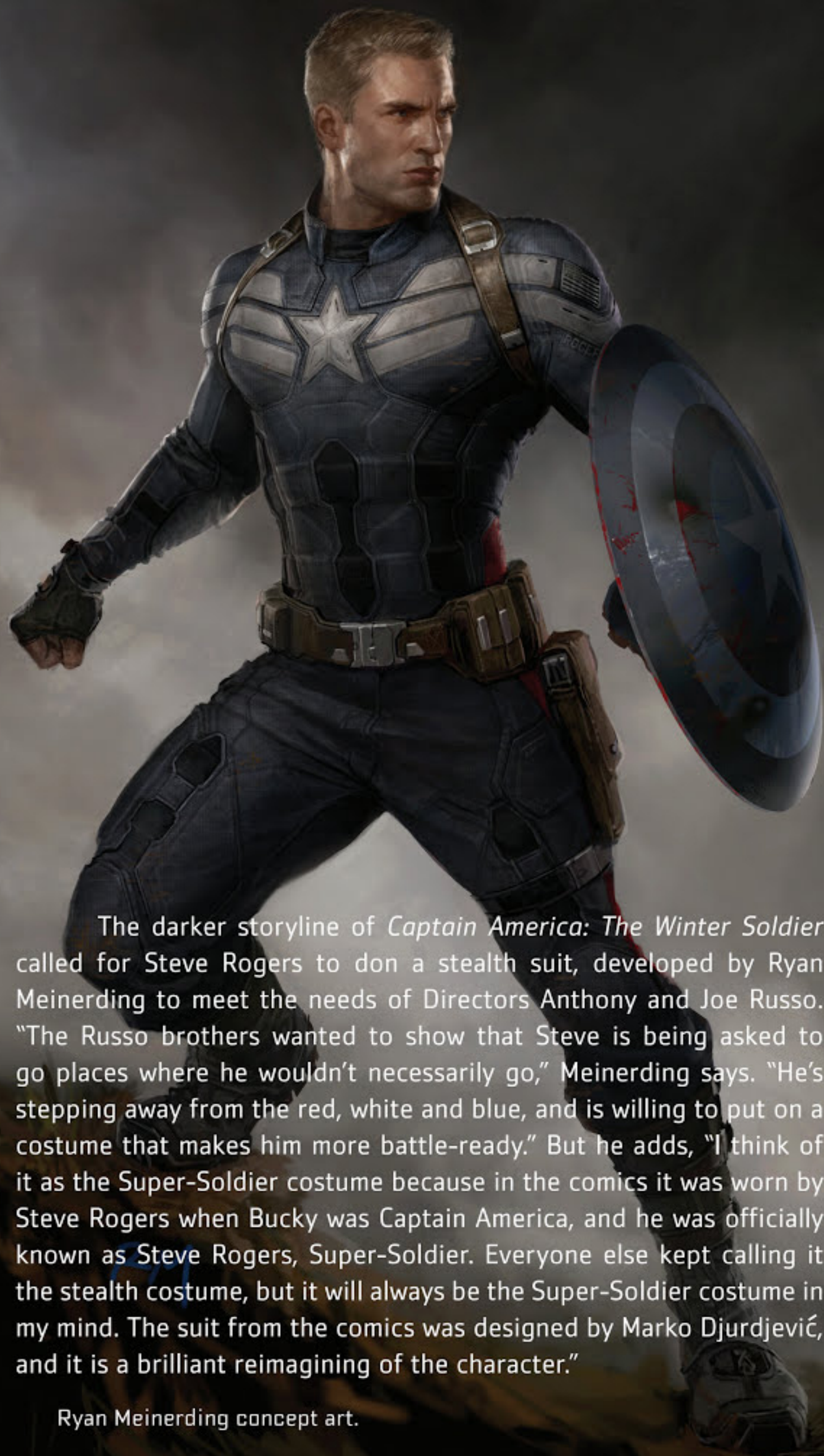
Charlie Wen
concept art.





Rodney Fuentebella keyframe.

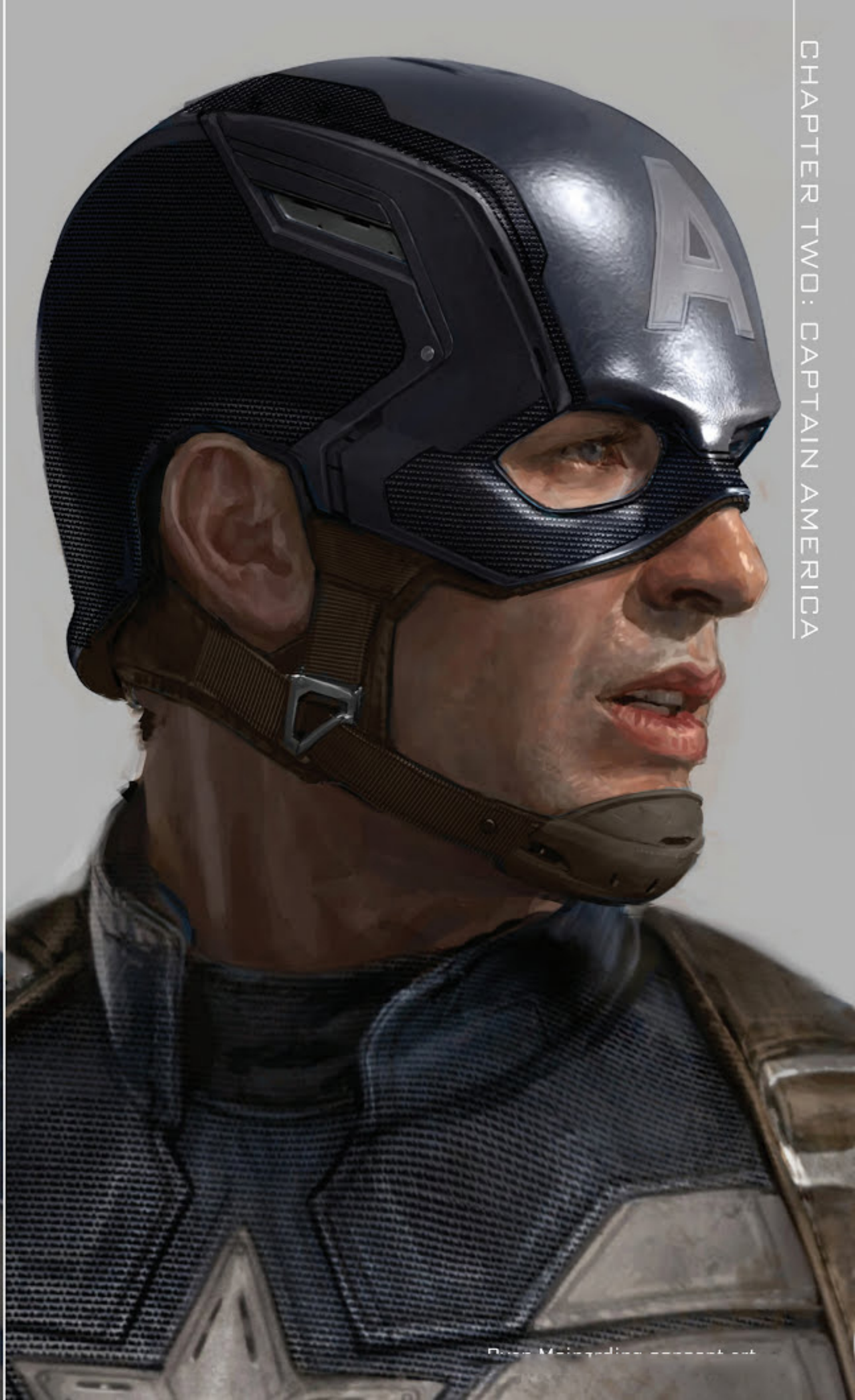




The darker storyline of *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* called for Steve Rogers to don a stealth suit, developed by Ryan Meinerding to meet the needs of Directors Anthony and Joe Russo. "The Russo brothers wanted to show that Steve is being asked to go places where he wouldn't necessarily go," Meinerding says. "He's stepping away from the red, white and blue, and is willing to put on a costume that makes him more battle-ready." But he adds, "I think of it as the Super-Soldier costume because in the comics it was worn by Steve Rogers when Bucky was Captain America, and he was officially known as Steve Rogers, Super-Soldier. Everyone else kept calling it the stealth costume, but it will always be the Super-Soldier costume in my mind. The suit from the comics was designed by Marko Djurdjević, and it is a brilliant reimagining of the character."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.







Rodney Fuentebella keyframe process.





Rodney Fuentebella keyframe.





CHAPTER THREE

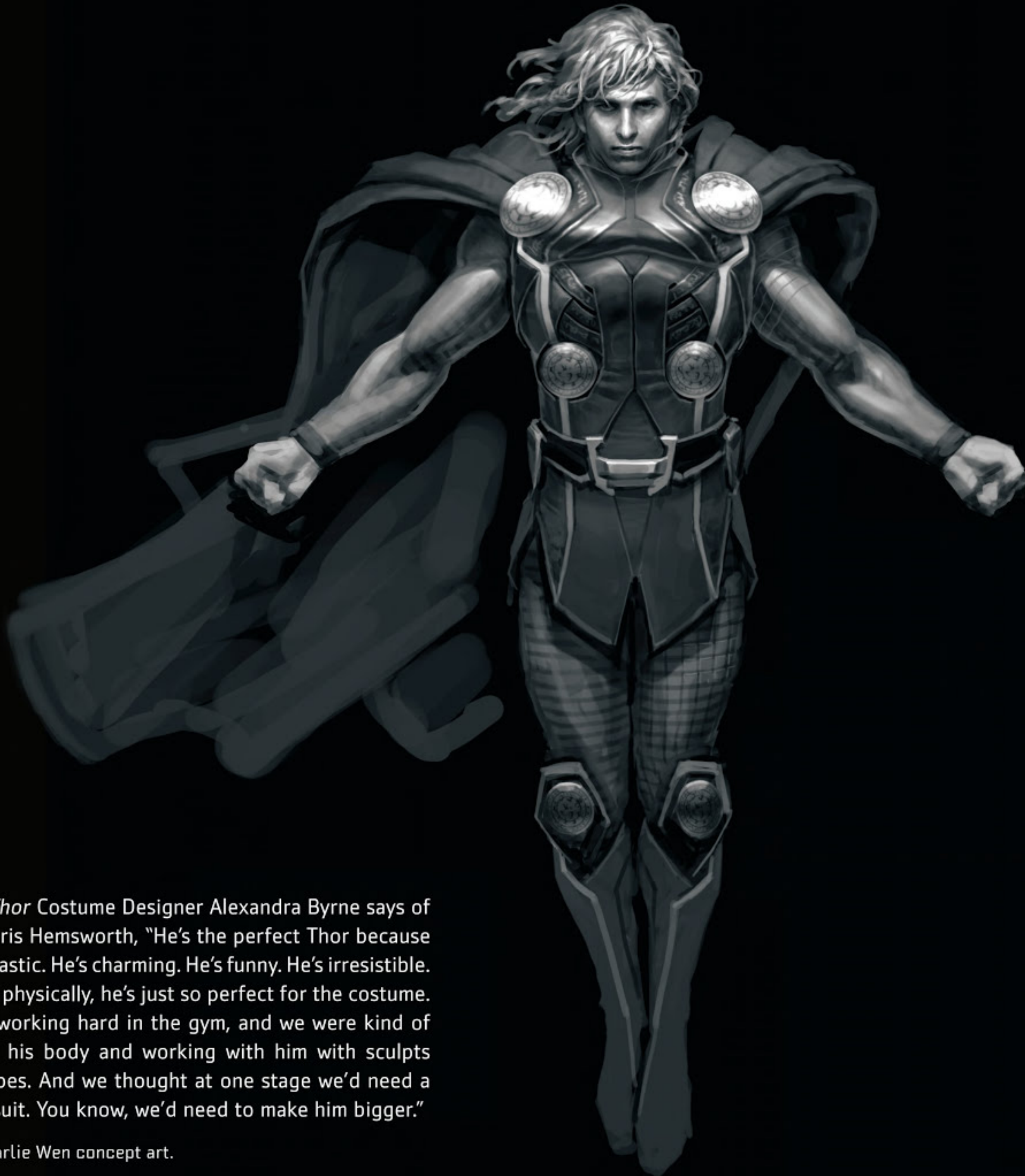
THOR

A Stan Lee, Larry Lieber and Jack Kirby creation bridging the gap between epic fantasy and far-out sci-fi, Thor was surely destined to be an essential piece of the MCU puzzle. “When we started the design process on the first *Thor*, it was mostly an amalgamation of classic Norse mythology and elements from the Jack Kirby era of comics,” explains Charlie Wen, Visual Development Supervisor for *Thor*. “We needed him to be more than a super hero — he had to be a warrior. The comics were a bit too theatrical. Thor was larger than life: high shoulders and a constantly billowing cape. I looked to integrate elements of traditional Japanese samurai designs while still utilizing the Jack Kirby designs as well as Norse influence. The first costume ended up being very simple, no superficial textures or reliefs — it was more about keeping the focus

on interesting shapes and materials that we had never seen before.”

In *Thor: The Dark World*, the mythic elements within Thor’s celestial homeland of Asgard became more humanized and everyday — as did the heroes. “We utilized textures like leather, gold and iron that were closer to Earth-based materials,” Wen says. “But even more than that, it was about taking the theatrical elements of the first *Thor* film and peeling away the mystery and idealization, and introducing the understandable and practical. At first look, the audience should be able to understand how the materials of the suit meld together and how the mechanisms, like fasteners and belts, work. At his core, Thor is a warrior, but we must also always be mindful of retaining his regal heritage.”





Thor Costume Designer Alexandra Byrne says of actor Chris Hemsworth, "He's the perfect Thor because he's fantastic. He's charming. He's funny. He's irresistible. But also physically, he's just so perfect for the costume. He was working hard in the gym, and we were kind of tracking his body and working with him with sculpts and shapes. And we thought at one stage we'd need a muscle suit. You know, we'd need to make him bigger."

Charlie Wen concept art.



Charlie Wen concept art



Ryan Meinerding concept art.

But Hemsworth's dedication to his new role outshone expectations. According to Ryan Meinerding, Visual Development Supervisor for *Thor*, the actor's unexpected bulk actually caused problems in the Wardrobe Department. "They had sculpted those chain-mail arms, which are actually remarkably complicated," Meinerding says. "And I guess he got a lot bigger, so they had to carve out on the inside so they could actually fit his arms in. I think he actually also had to take them off every so often because they were so tight still that they were cutting off circulation to his arms."





"Alex Byrne and the Costume Department had been working on this stuff for I think a year and a half to two years before we even turned up," actor Chris Hemsworth says. "It was incredibly detailed, beautiful costume."





A concept art illustration of Thor, played by Chris Hemsworth, standing on a jagged, snow-covered mountain peak. He is wearing his iconic Asgardian armor, which is dark grey with gold-colored circular accents on the chest and shoulders. A vibrant red cape flows behind him, catching the light. He holds the hilt of Mjolnir in his right hand. The background is a breathtaking cosmic scene with a deep blue and black sky filled with stars, nebulae, and distant galaxies. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the armor and the ruggedness of the mountain.

When it came to suiting up on screen, Hemsworth didn't let his designers down, according to Charlie Wen. "I think he brought something to it that wasn't typical," Wen says. "It captured Thor, but at the same time it felt like, okay, it wasn't just this god of thunder. There's actually something more human underneath. So it was really cool to see him start gearing up with the costume, especially when it just started as an illustration."

Charlie Wen concept art.



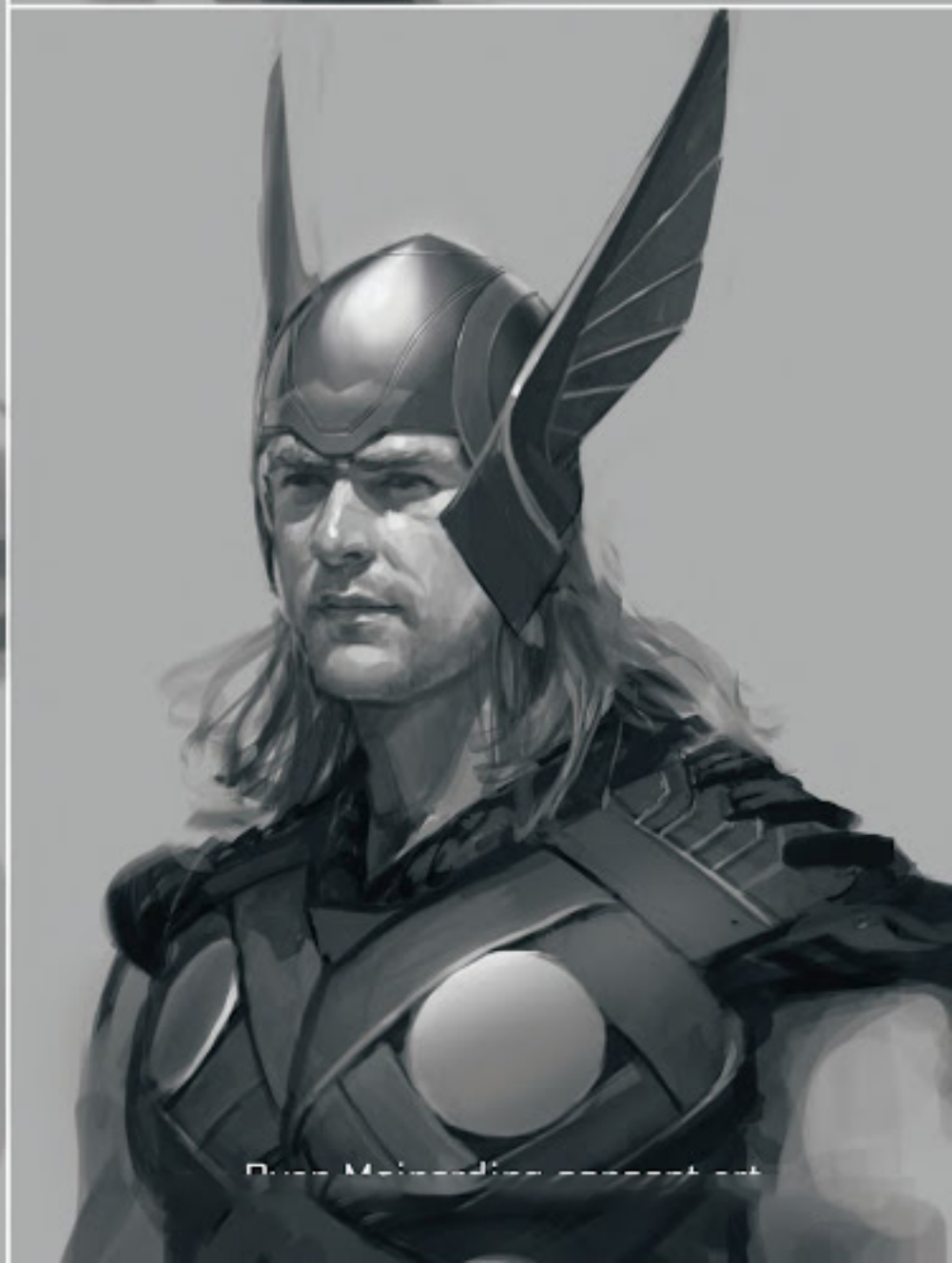
Charlie Wen concept art.

While Thor's core costume presented a variety of challenges, his headgear proved particularly tricky. Says Byrne, "I've done helmets before, but not on this scale. We had digital forms of the actors so we could sculpt on those, because a helmet is so much about the proportions of the face. The eyes, the jawline, they have to work in close-up. And if they don't, and if you can't see the face, and you can't read the expression, you've got problems." Looking at the work of a variety of different Thor comic-book artists for inspiration, Byrne and her team managed to craft a helmet that looked as functional as it was stylized. It wasn't an easy task. Many artists, including the legendary Jack Kirby, tended to exaggerate form for dramatic effect — a luxury the filmmakers didn't have in the realistic world they were constructing.



Concept art by Ryan Meinerding with Charlie Wen (inset).







Warren Manser concept art.









NO STEP



Charlie Wen concept art.







Charlie Wen concept art.







Andy Park keyframe.







MJOLNIR

It's a rare occasion when a prop from a film draws the same level of interest and anticipation from fans as the movie's stars. But with Thor's trusted hammer, Mjolnir, that was exactly the case — and filmmakers knew it. Almost 200 different versions of the famous hammer were designed in the hunt for the perfect super-hero accessory; when the final Mjolnir was chosen for the initial film, the weapon was cast in three different weights. "If we're doing a scene where there's a lot of dialogue and you'll see the hammer close up, you unfortunately have to wield the heaviest hammer," *Thor* Property Master Russell Bobbitt says. "The heavier the hammer, the more detail it'll give you, the more shine. When doing stunts, we get into sort of lighter ones that are made of foam. And he's able to throw it and catch it and do the things he does."







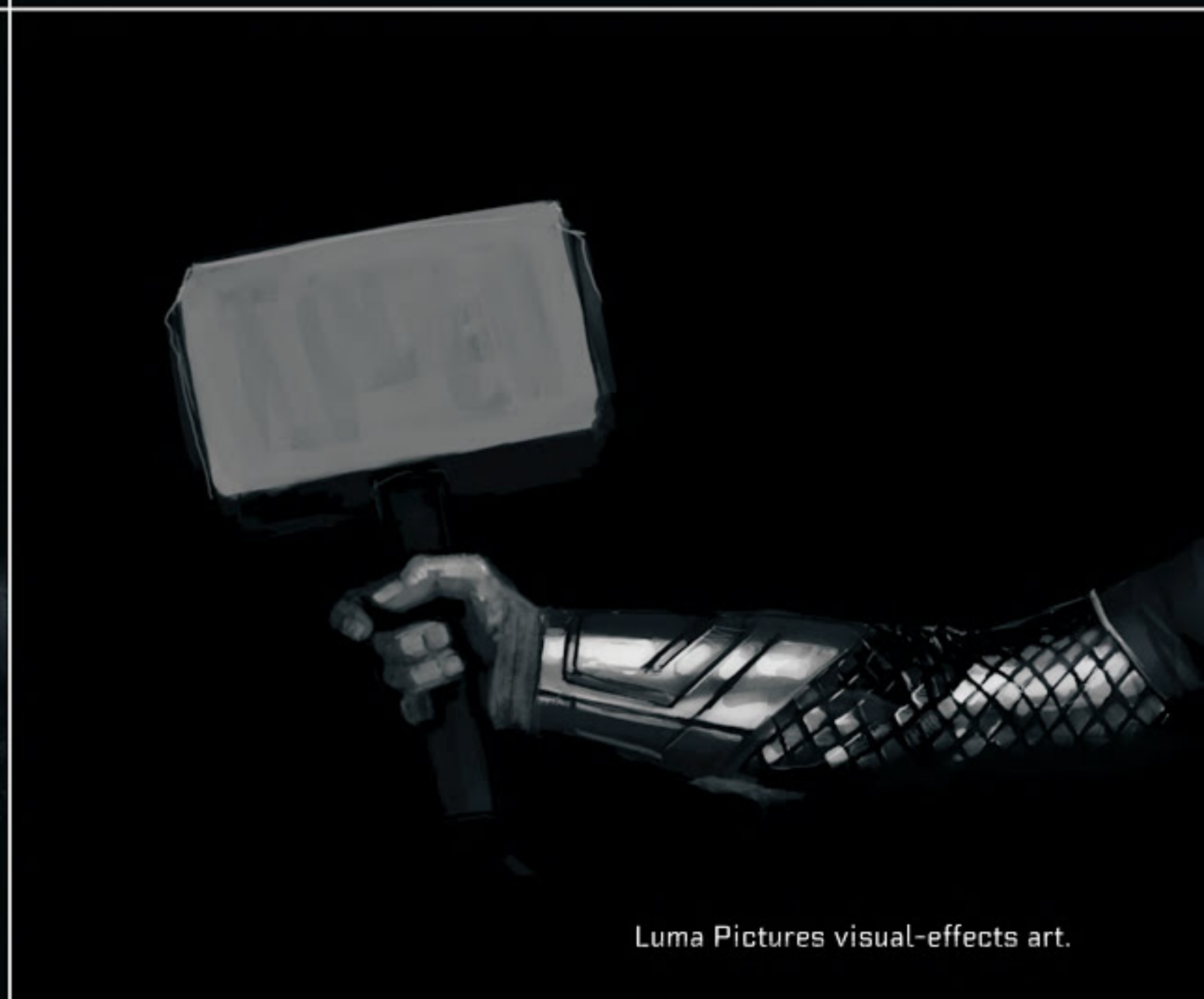


Charlie Wen concept art.





Anyone seeing Thor in action will want a Mjolnir of their own, according to President of Marvel Studios Kevin Feige. "Kids are going to come out and they're going to be practicing," he says. "I think it's going to become one of these iconic weapons of cinema."





CHAPTER FOUR

HULK

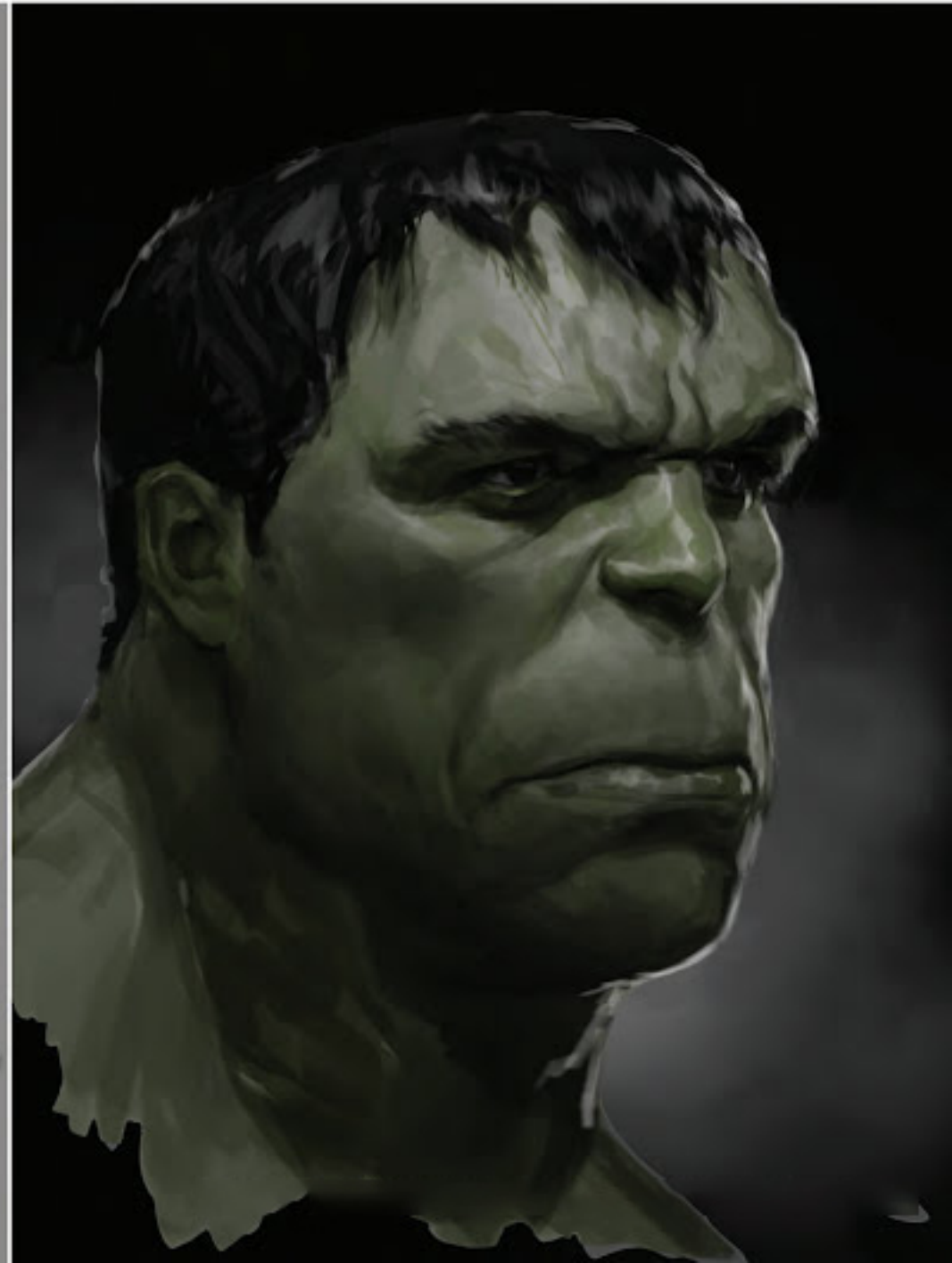
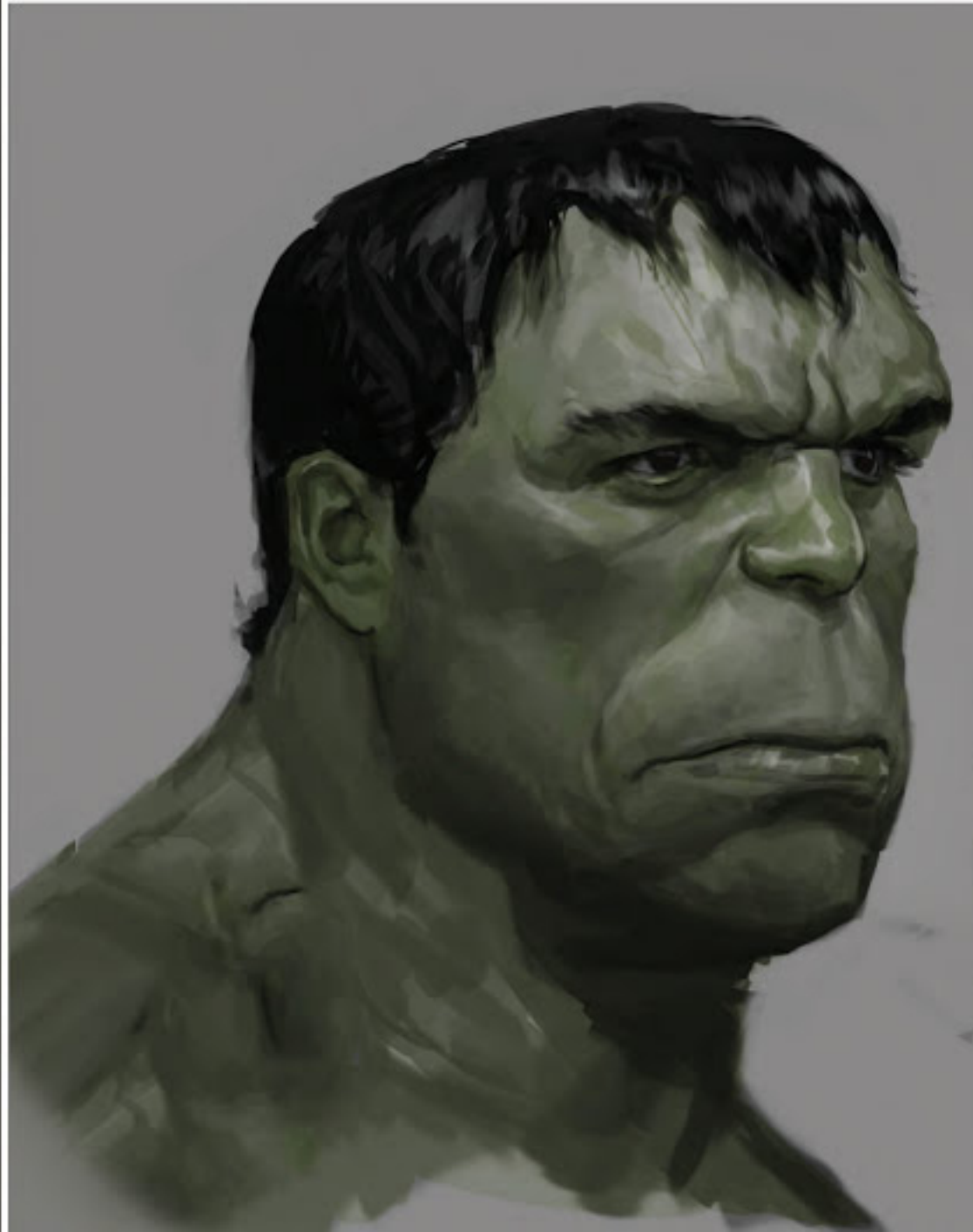
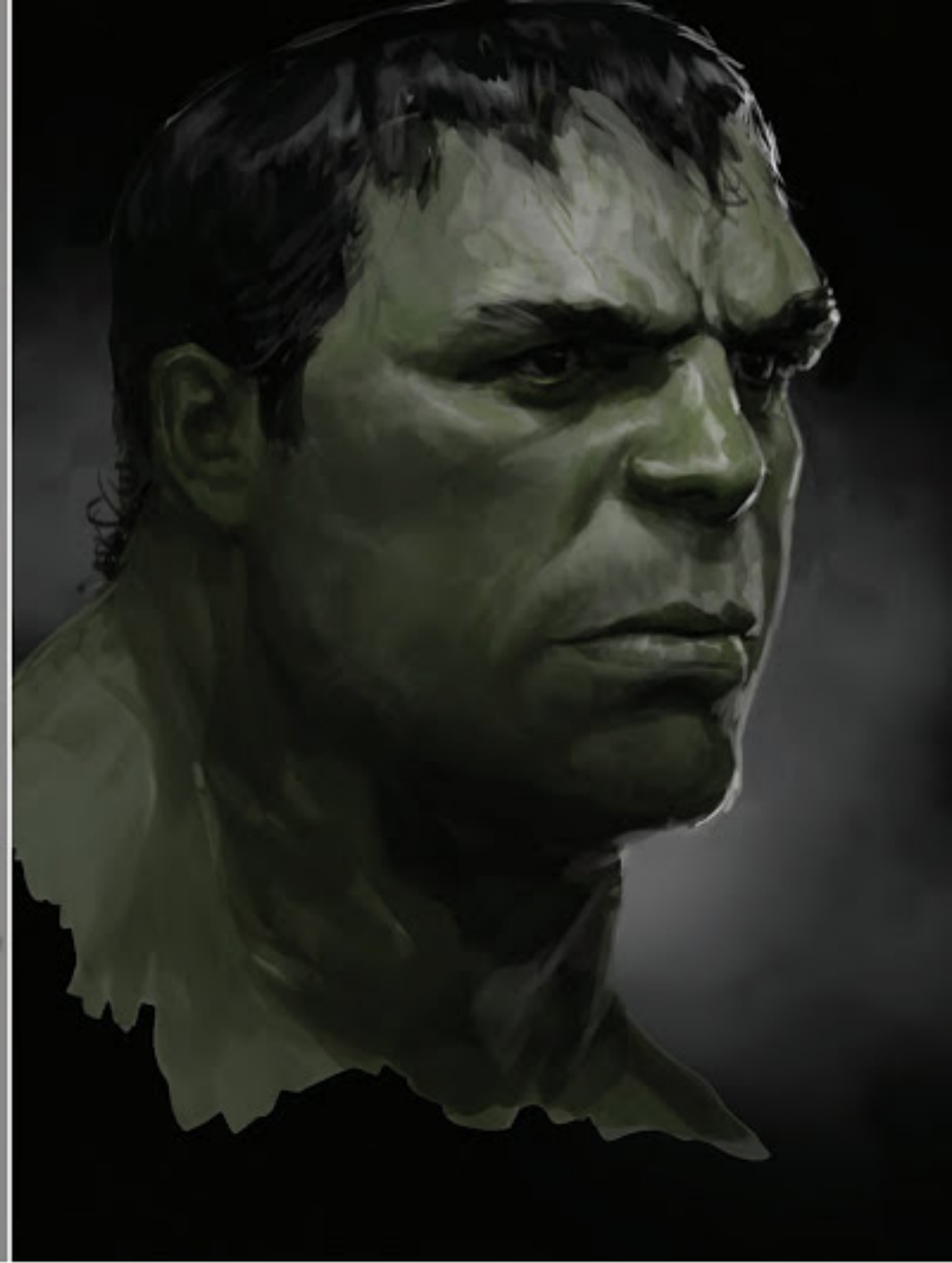
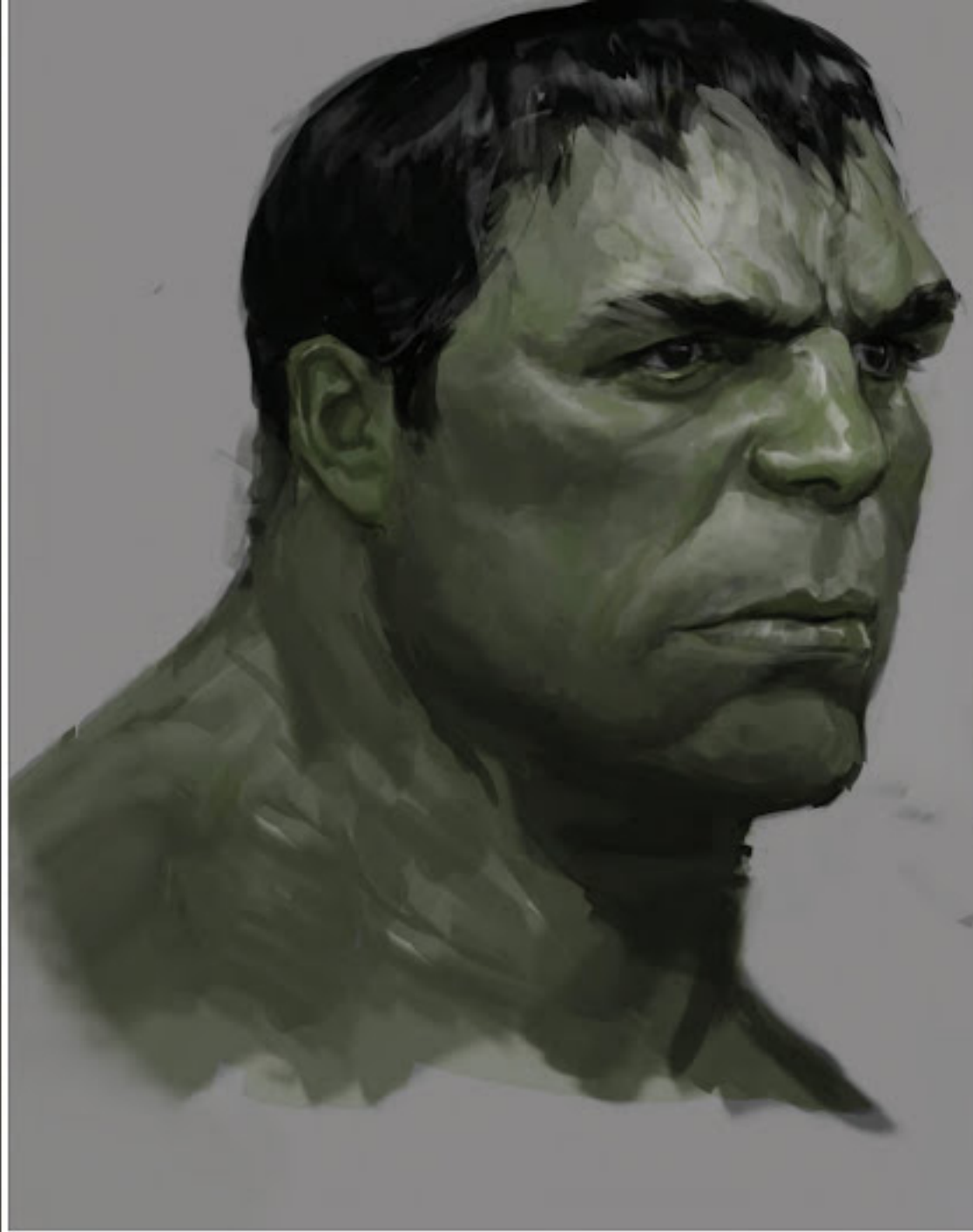
Instantly familiar from his green skin, tattered trousers and monstrous appearance, the Hulk is one of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's most famous and popular co-creations. With a live-action series, multiple cartoons and two big-screen spectacles to his name before *Marvel's The Avengers*, the Hulk presented the Visual Development team with quite the challenge in crafting something audiences had never seen before. "One of the difficulties in designing the Hulk is he needs to be a hero as well as a monster," says Ryan Meinerding, who served as Visual Development Supervisor for *Marvel's The Avengers*. "From the early Kirby designs up until around the '80s, the Hulk was sort of a combination of Frankenstein, a gorilla and a turn-of-the-century strongman. We were definitely interested in trying to get and maintain the tone of *that* Hulk. In previous films, people have sometimes stressed the hero over the monster during his conceptualization; in doing so, I think you lose the best parts of the character. I was very interested in exploring the Hulk as a monster, and then letting him be a hero through his actions."



W-7



Ryan Meinerding concept art.

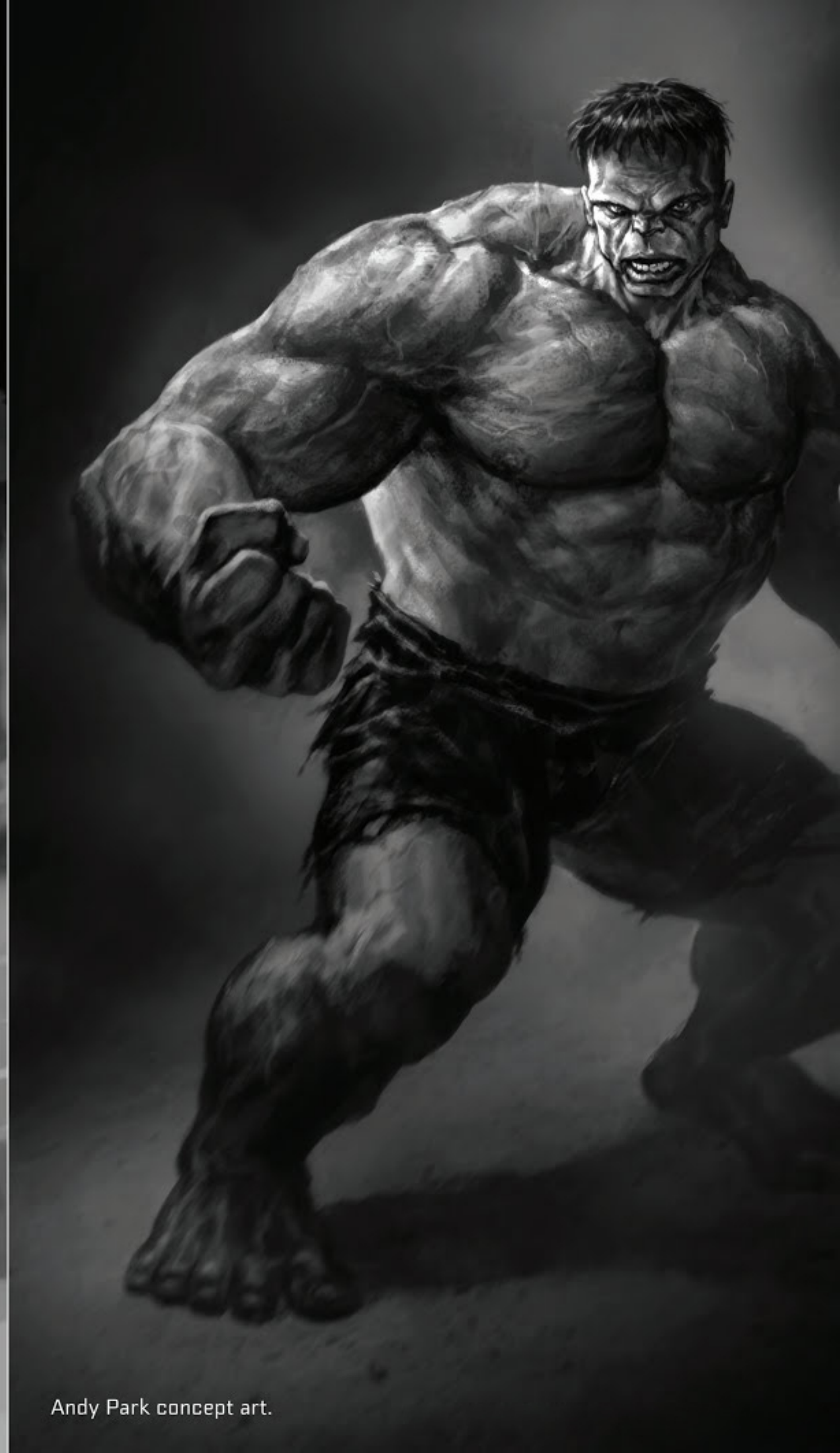






"For Hulk, we were looking at a lot of the early comic designs," Ryan Meinerding says. "We were definitely trying to get the tone of that Hulk and stay away from the more modern versions, where he is more classically heroic and honestly looks like a bodybuilder."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.

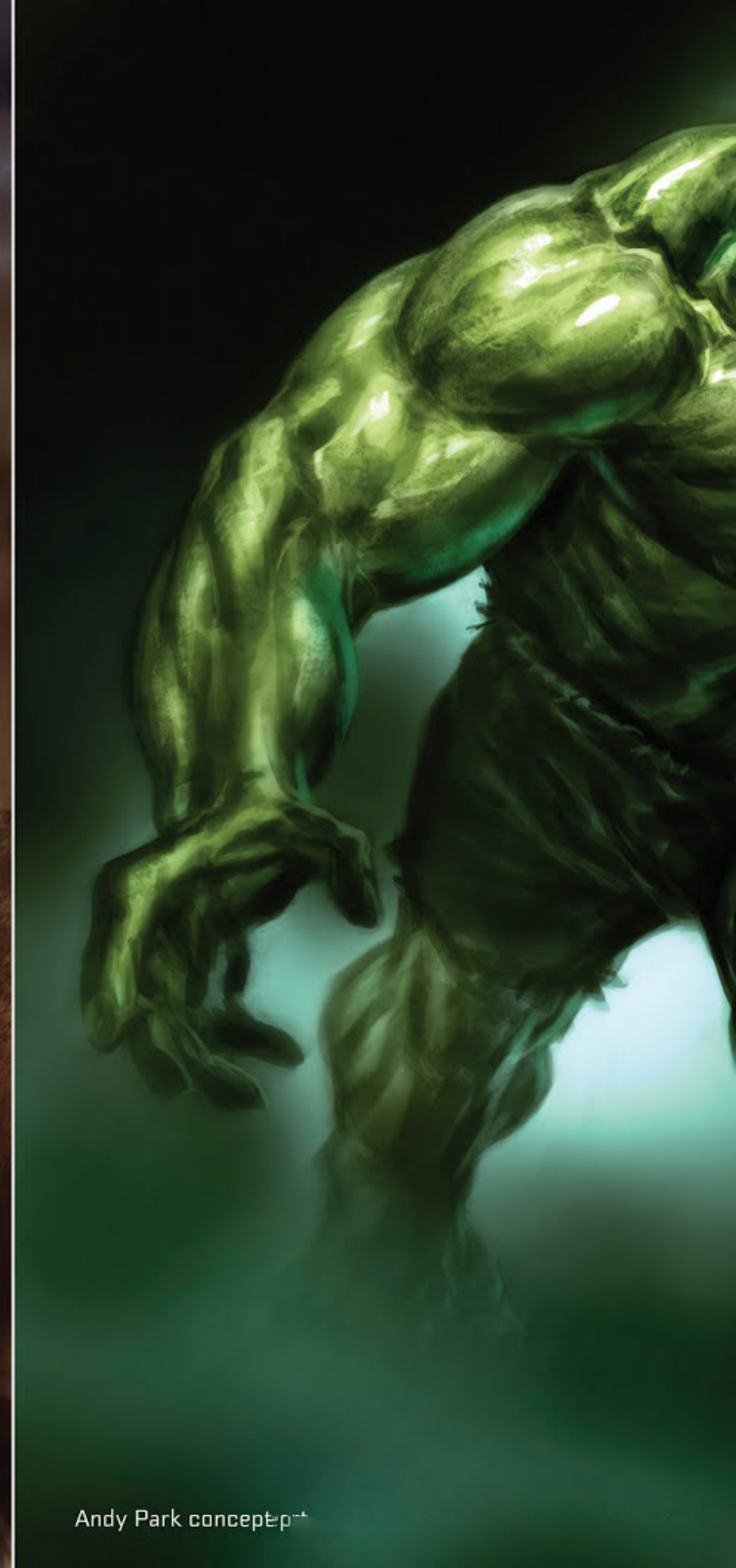


Andy Park concept art.



Andy Park concept art.

Park



Andy Park concept art.



Charlie Wen character designs.



The Hulk II
I-M-CAIG





Andy Park concept art.

Andy Park



"The process for designing the Hulk was a very collaborative one," Ryan Meinerding says. "Charlie Wen did a really fantastic ZBrush model of the body, and then I went to work trying to figure out the head. I had the chance to do a few different expressions for him. And once we had an early approval on that work, Josh Herman at Legacy Effects took the head I was working on and put it on Charlie's Hulk body. We didn't expect it to work as well as it did, but it turned out to be a really rewarding process. And I think we both have a strong sense of pride in the Hulk design we ended up with."

Charlie Wen computer models.







Rodney Fuentebella keyframe.



CHAPTER FIVE

BLACK WIDOW

Unlike her teammates, Natasha Romanoff — the Black Widow — is iconic for her simplicity and elegance. The sleek, ebony, form-fitting redesign was introduced by John Romita in 1970 and served as the foundation for Concept Artist Andy Park to create her look(s) for the MCU. “The essence of Black Widow is both her physicality and mental prowess,” Park says. “Her ability to manipulate and ultimately overcome her opponents is very much a dance: It’s beautiful and intentional. We certainly give homage to her comic-book roots, but don’t go as far in the over-the-top super-hero direction. When designing Black Widow, I am always considering the realities of her character. She is a femme fatale as well as a master assassin, so her look necessitates both of those aspects. I wanted to create a blend that was pleasantly disarming while maintaining a utilitarian function of the suit.”

This streamlined yet tactical aesthetic was further conveyed by the materials used to make her costume. “We stayed away from black latex, from straight black leather, from anything that’s going to make her look like every other version of every other black-clad super-heroine costume that has existed on film,” Executive Producer Jeremy Latcham adds. Part of that new, practical focus was on accessories. “I always finish off her look with the iconic wrist bracelets, or Widow Stings,” Park says. “It’s conceptually very basic, yet it’s vital to upgrade them in every film as a way to further accentuate her striking silhouette.”

Andy Park keyframe.







Christian Cordella concept art.

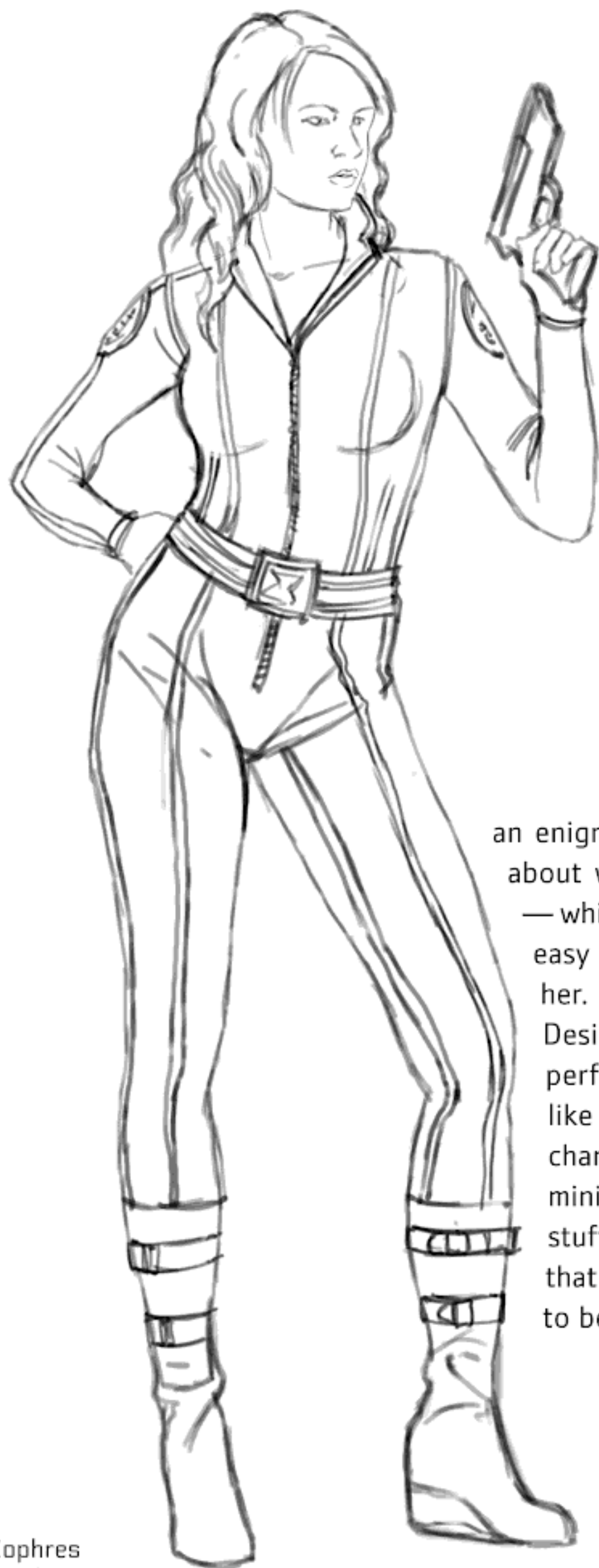
BLACK WIDOW REVEAL



Ryan Meinerding
concept art.



John Mann concept art



Actress Scarlett Johansson depicts an enigmatic, highly capable S.H.I.E.L.D. agent about which much remains to be discovered — while at the same time makes life relatively easy for designers tasked with transforming her. According to *Iron Man 2* Costume Designer Mary Zophres, Johansson is “the perfect Black Widow, because she looks like the comic book is drawn.” As for the character’s timeless look, she adds, “It’s a minimalist costume, as opposed to a lot of stuff going on. There’s just very simple details that draw your eye to the places that you want to be drawn to with Scarlett.”







Andy Park concept art.



Andy Park concept art.



Black Widow's costume evolved in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*; to freshen up her appearance, Andy Park played with different materials. "I experimented with giving her costume a two-tone look not only in values, but also in sheen and material," Park says. "Her past costumes pretty much had her in one consistent material throughout the outfit, with the lines created mostly with tubing and stitch lines. With this take on the classic Black Widow look, I wanted the lines of the costume to be created by the transition from one material to the next."

Andy Park concept art.

Andy Park

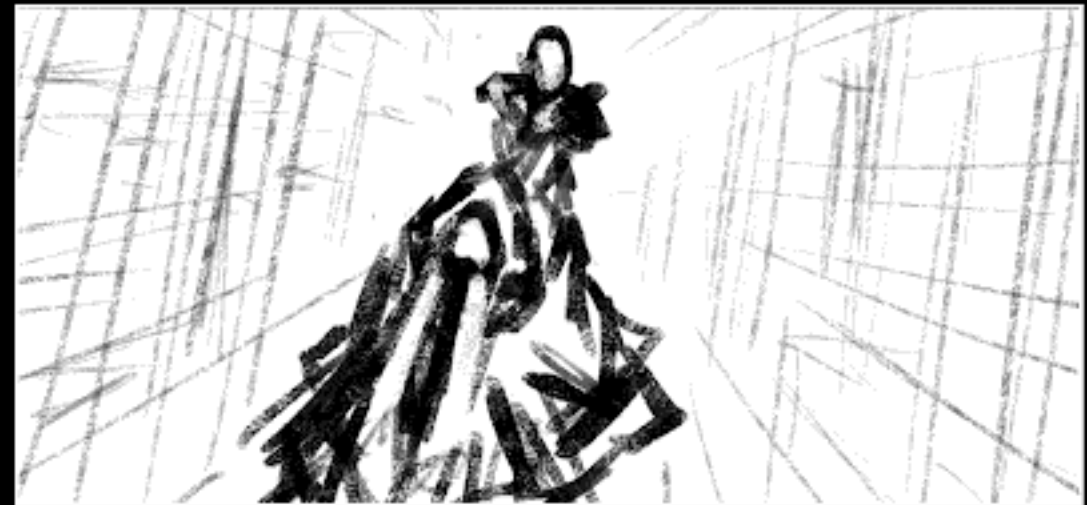




"The focus in the keyframes we do here in the Visual Development Department is the characters," Andy Park says. "For this one, the moment was during the final battle in *Marvel's The Avengers* when Captain America boosts Black Widow up into

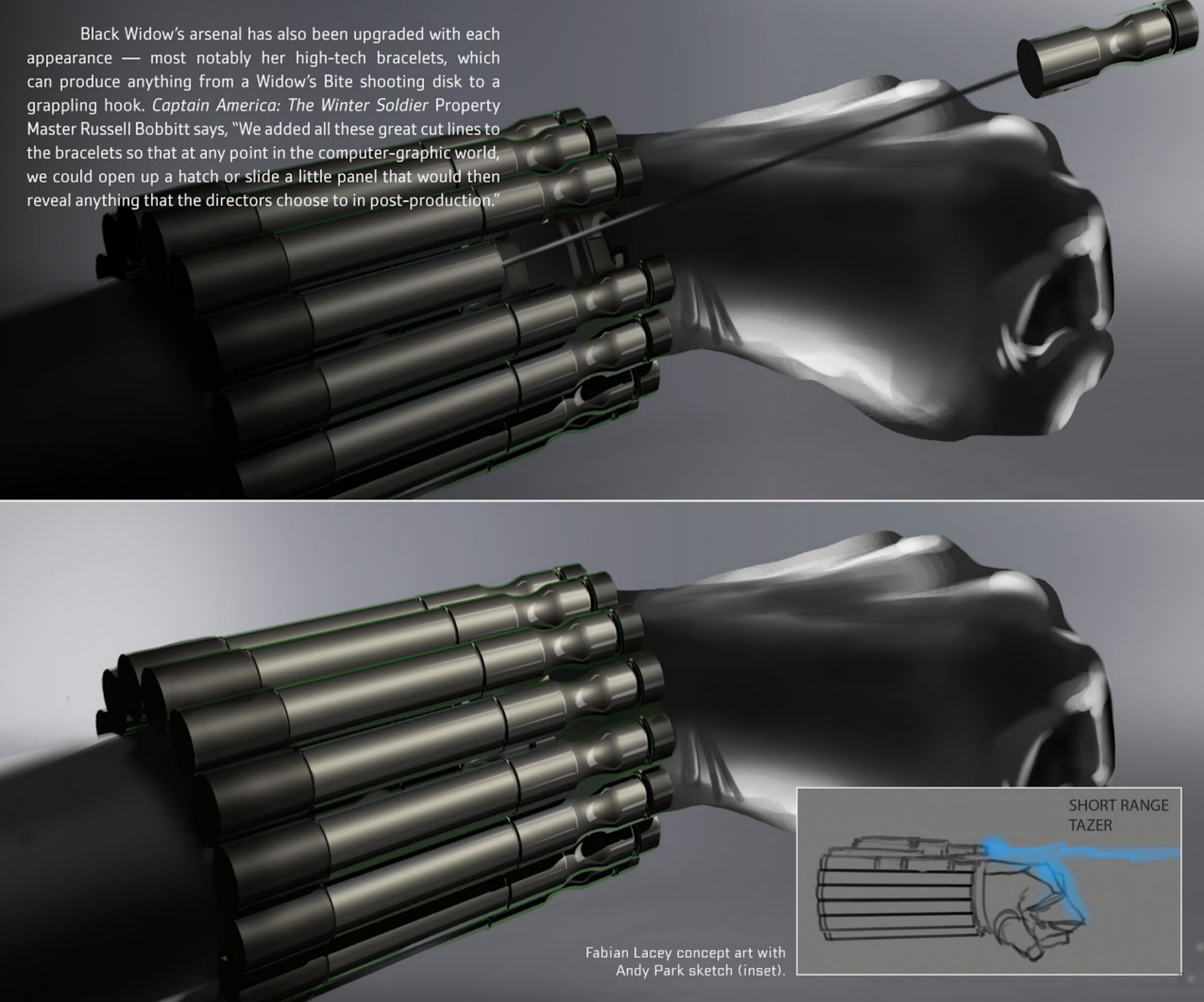
the sky for her to gain control of one of the flying chariots. I did several rough sketches of what that could look like. Joss Whedon liked the one where she was essentially climbing onto the back of the driver and embedding knives into the Chitauri's

back, which she then uses to steer the ship. I tried to convey a cautious confidence in Black Widow's face. She's confident in her abilities, but fully realizes that she is still just a human and not a super-being like her other Avengers comrades."





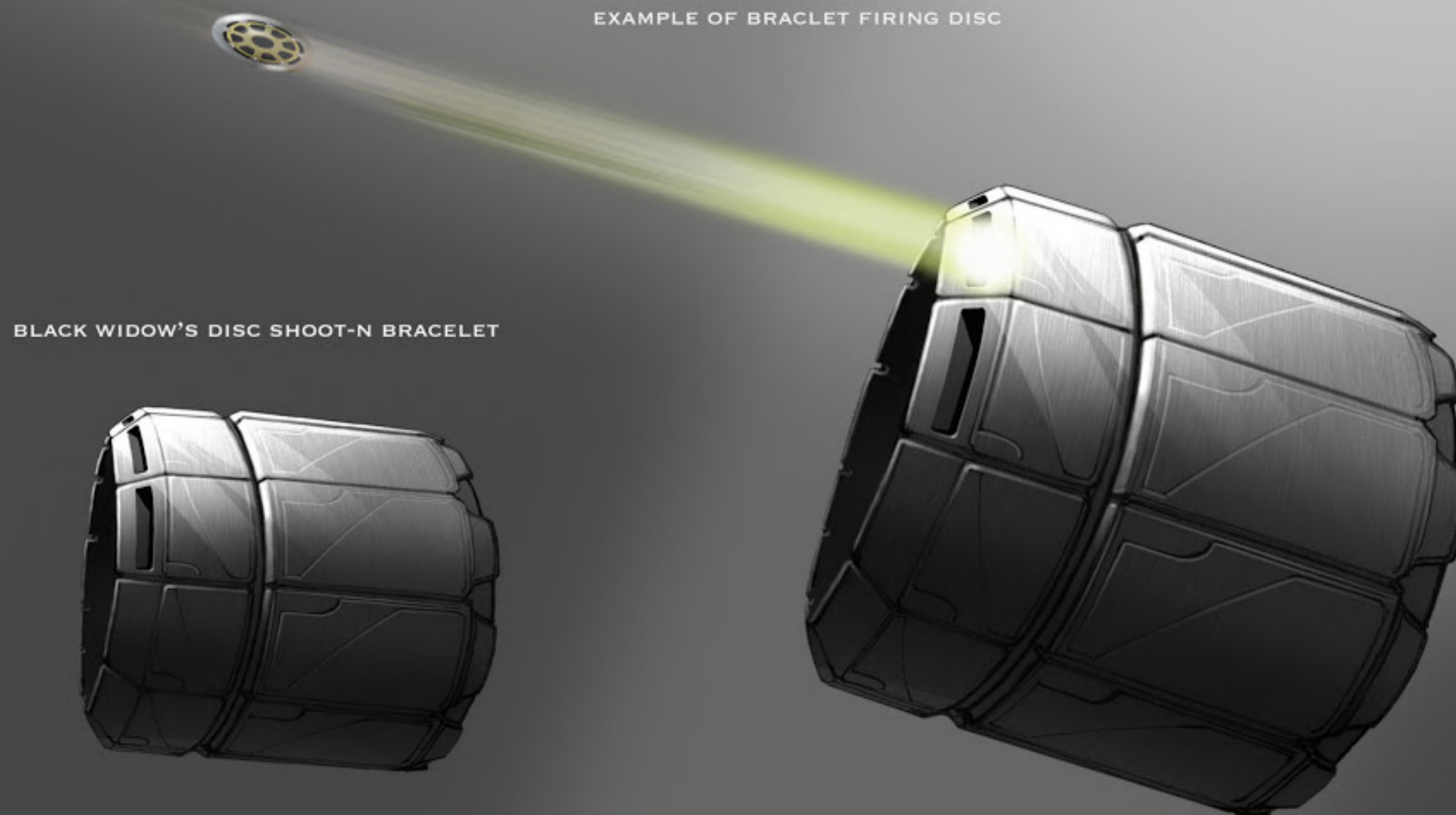
Black Widow's arsenal has also been upgraded with each appearance — most notably her high-tech bracelets, which can produce anything from a Widow's Bite shooting disk to a grappling hook. *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* Property Master Russell Bobbitt says, "We added all these great cut lines to the bracelets so that at any point in the computer-graphic world, we could open up a hatch or slide a little panel that would then reveal anything that the directors choose to in post-production."



Fabian Lacey concept art with
Andy Park sketch (inset).



John Eaves concept art.



WIDOW'S DISC DESIGN



Andy Park keyframe.

Park





CHAPTER SIX HAWKEYE

Clint Barton, codename Hawkeye, is notable for not only his expertise with a bow and arrow, but also his deep-purple costume and birdlike, pointed mask. While that classic and striking look defined Hawkeye for decades, the Visual Development team took its inspiration instead from his more modern, minimalistic red-and-black S.H.I.E.L.D. costume, designed by Bryan Hitch in *The Ultimates*. For Concept Artist Andy Park, the key to cracking Hawkeye's design for film stemmed from a focus on his personality and skillset, rather than his comic-book aesthetic. "Hawkeye is all about efficiency. Why shoot 10 bullets at an enemy when you can disable him with one arrow — or better yet disable 10 opponents with just one arrow? He is a chess player, always thinking two steps ahead. He is a master tactician. His

talents lie in having an overview of any given situation and knowing what moves to make to maximize his — and his team's — productivity," Park explains. "Hawkeye's look is all about practicality and mobility, something to facilitate his skillset as opposed to purely being a 'costume.'"

As an avid fan of the West Coast Avengers, Park was also eager to mention Hawkeye's innate leadership capabilities. "From the onset of conceptualization, Hawkeye was to me the Hawkeye leading the West Coast Avengers. He was a leader, yet he was not perfect. He's no Captain America, but he is still noble — a real leader-in-training." Park's strategically comprehensive yet streamlined designs allow Hawkeye to live up to his legend as a lethal weapon in the MCU.







Andy Park keyframe sequence.



Ryan Meinerding
character
design.





Just as Hawkeye's weapons and fighting style were big influences on his design, so too was the casting of Jeremy Renner in the role. Costume Designer Alexandra Byrne explains, "Jeremy is extremely agile and wanted to achieve a clean silhouette. Our first fittings helped to evolve style and detail. Jeremy's stance for drawing the bowstring threw his neck tall and straight, but in a crouch position his neck came forward — so we developed a center-back detail in the stand collar made with woven elastics. This meant the collar could stretch back with Jeremy as he drew the bow and not be left poking out as he bent forward."

Andy Park concept art.





Andy Park concept art.



Concept art by Christopher Ross
with Fabian Lacey (insets).



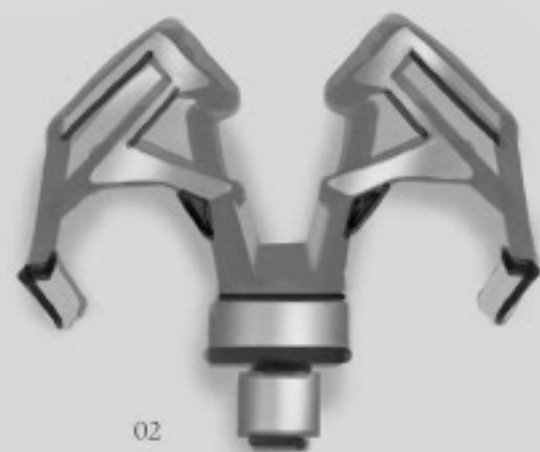
Patricia Ramirez concept art



Fabian Lacey concept art.



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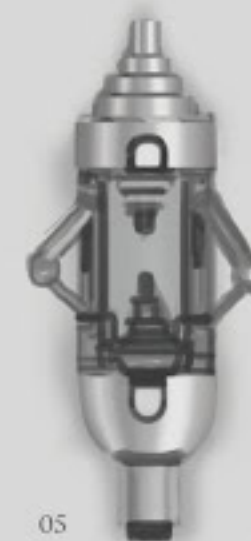
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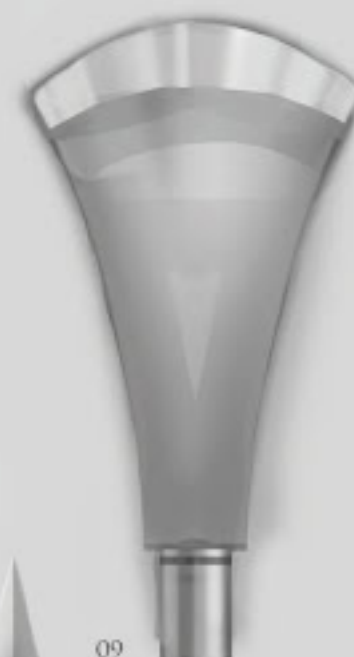
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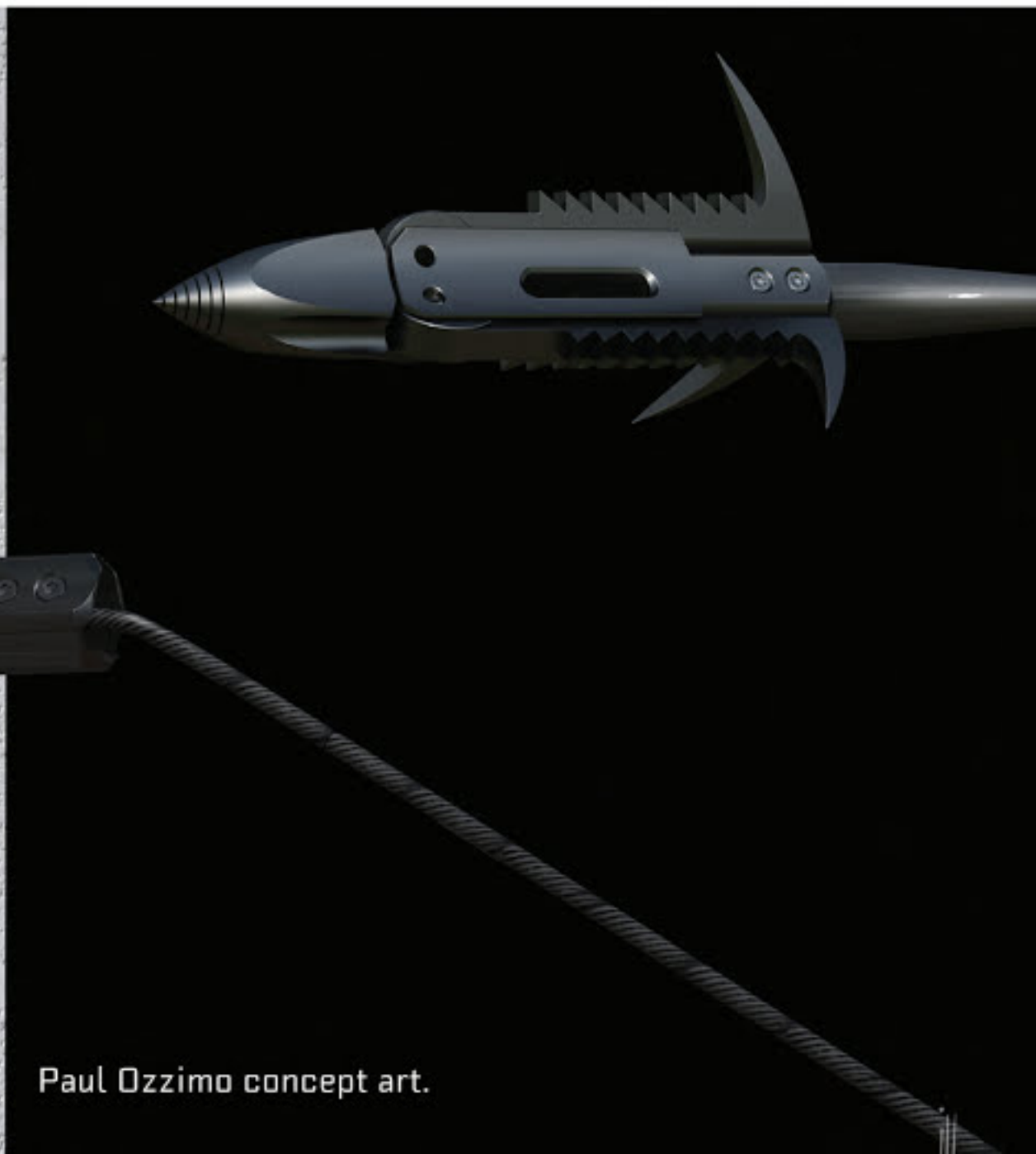
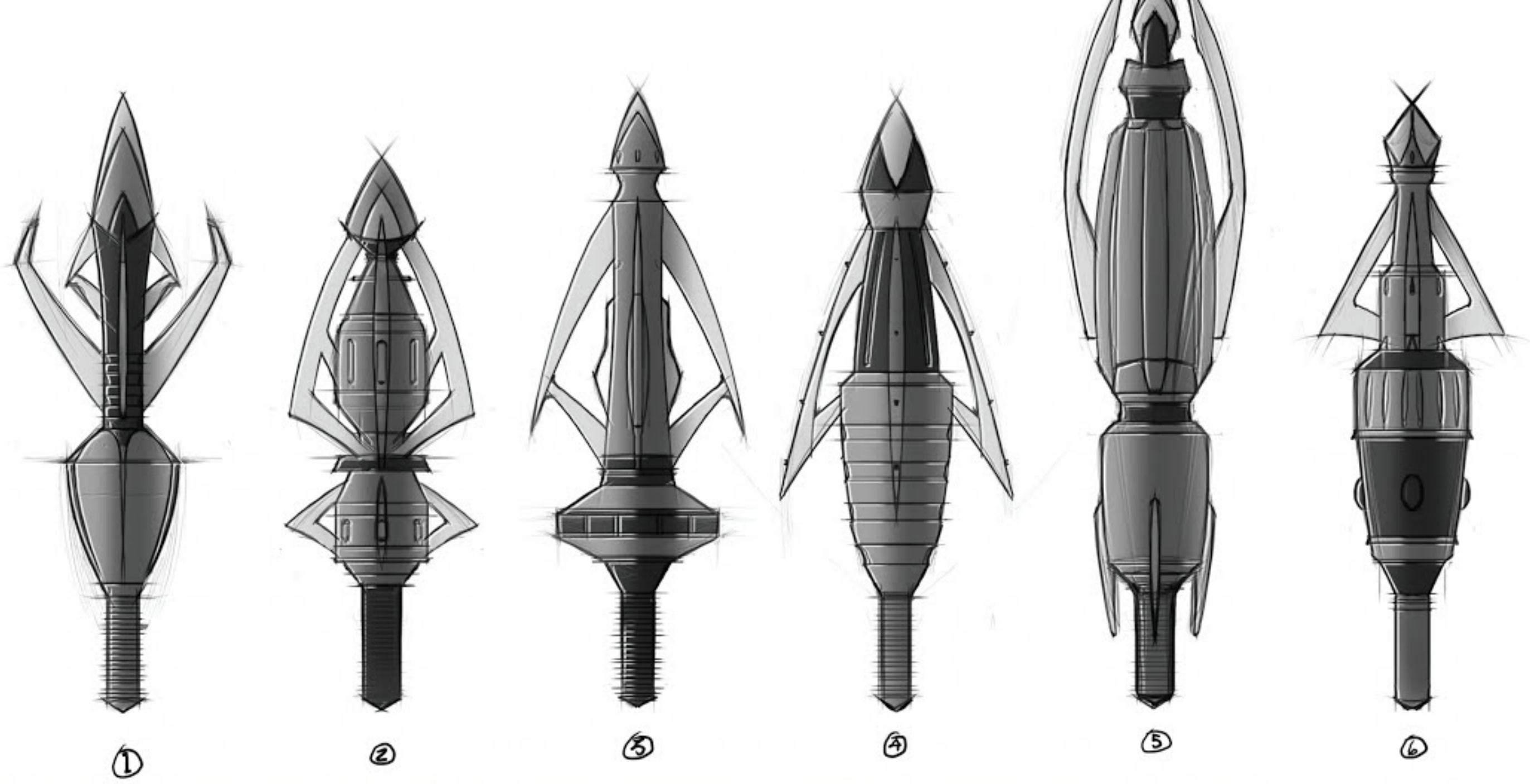
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Paul Ozzimo concept art.



Christopher Ross concept art.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ALLIES

Along the road to *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, the members of the Visual Development team at Marvel Studios have translated a number of comic-book icons into living, breathing, plausible characters who not only carry their own franchises, but also band together for the *Avengers* films. Yet these central heroes are never alone. The MCU is populated with an array of supporting characters, some of whom have seen their roles steadily build until they are every bit as integral to Marvel's future as the Avengers themselves. Perhaps the most well-known of these allies are part of the fictional government agency known as S.H.I.E.L.D. "S.H.I.E.L.D. is the secret organization that acts as glue for Marvel's first phase of their Cinematic Universe," Concept Artist Andy Park says. "It all started with the appearance of the director of S.H.I.E.L.D., Nick Fury, in the first *Iron Man* film. When designing Nick Fury, Maria Hill and the other S.H.I.E.L.D. agents, I attempted to incorporate their classic dark-blue costumes with light strappings all around, but I knew full well that a more realistic darker color for the strappings would probably be the way to go. S.H.I.E.L.D.'s look is essentially military with a touch of comic-book spy mixed in."

Outside this organization, additional heroes constantly find themselves lending a hand. Far more than a sidekick, Colonel James Rhodes' War Machine enters the fray with a design fully equipped to either assist Tony Stark or lead the attack himself. "The fun in designing War Machine comes from integrating the chunkier and heavily armored forms that Tony Stark would never use on his own suit," Marvel's Head of Visual Development Ryan Meinerding says. On the opposite end of the conceptual spectrum is Captain America's aerobatic ally, the Falcon, with a design that lends itself more to maneuverability and speed than War Machine's boundless firepower.





NICK FURY



"If you look at old renderings of Nick Fury, he's in a tight getup —chest straps and stuff," says Mary Zophres, Costume Designer for *Iron Man 2*. "I don't think anyone would ever dream of putting Sam Jackson in that spandex-y kind of thing."

Christian Cordella concept art.







Andy Park concept art.



"I felt that Nick Fury should be a statement of effortless authority," says Alexandra Byrne, Costume Designer for *Marvel's The Avengers*. "Combine this with Samuel L. Jackson's great style and innate ability to wear clothes, and the task is not difficult. Less is more was a clear way forward." From the possible end of the world in *Marvel's The Avengers* to the collapse of S.H.I.E.L.D. in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, Nick Fury is in the middle of it all. And there's one thing you can guarantee, according to Executive Producer Louis D'Esposito: "Sam Jackson is the epitome of cool, so whatever he's doing — whatever role he's playing — you know he's going to be cool."



Christian Cordella 13



Christian Cordella 13

In *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, things take a darker turn for Nick Fury — and that's reflected in his wardrobe. "The costumes represent a little more militant version of S.H.I.E.L.D.," Ryan Meinerding says. "Nick Fury is intended to look slightly fascist, like he might have gone too far in his attempts to protect the world."

Christian Cordella concept illustrations. © 2014 Marvel

WAR MACHINE



Adi Granov concept art.

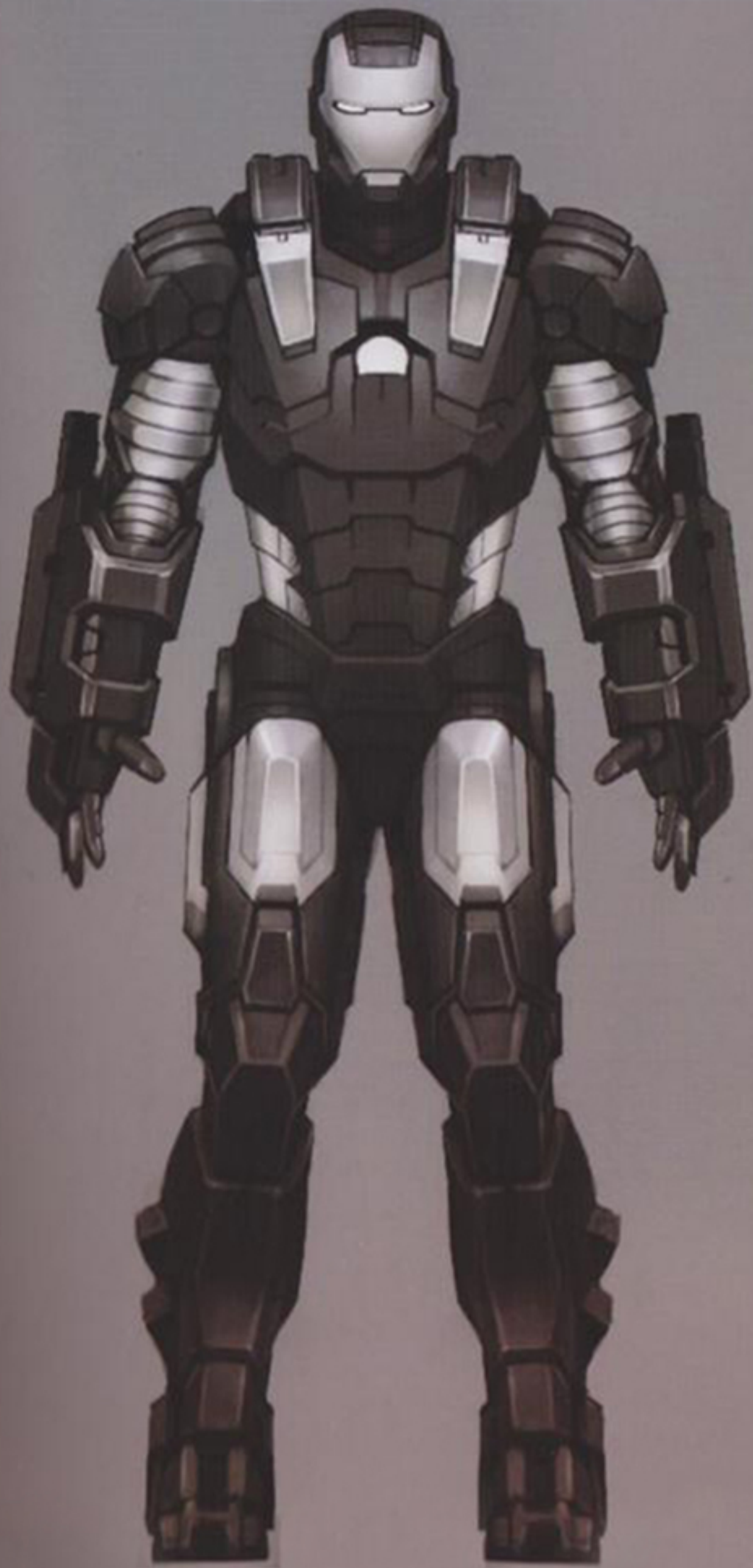




Adi Granov concept art.

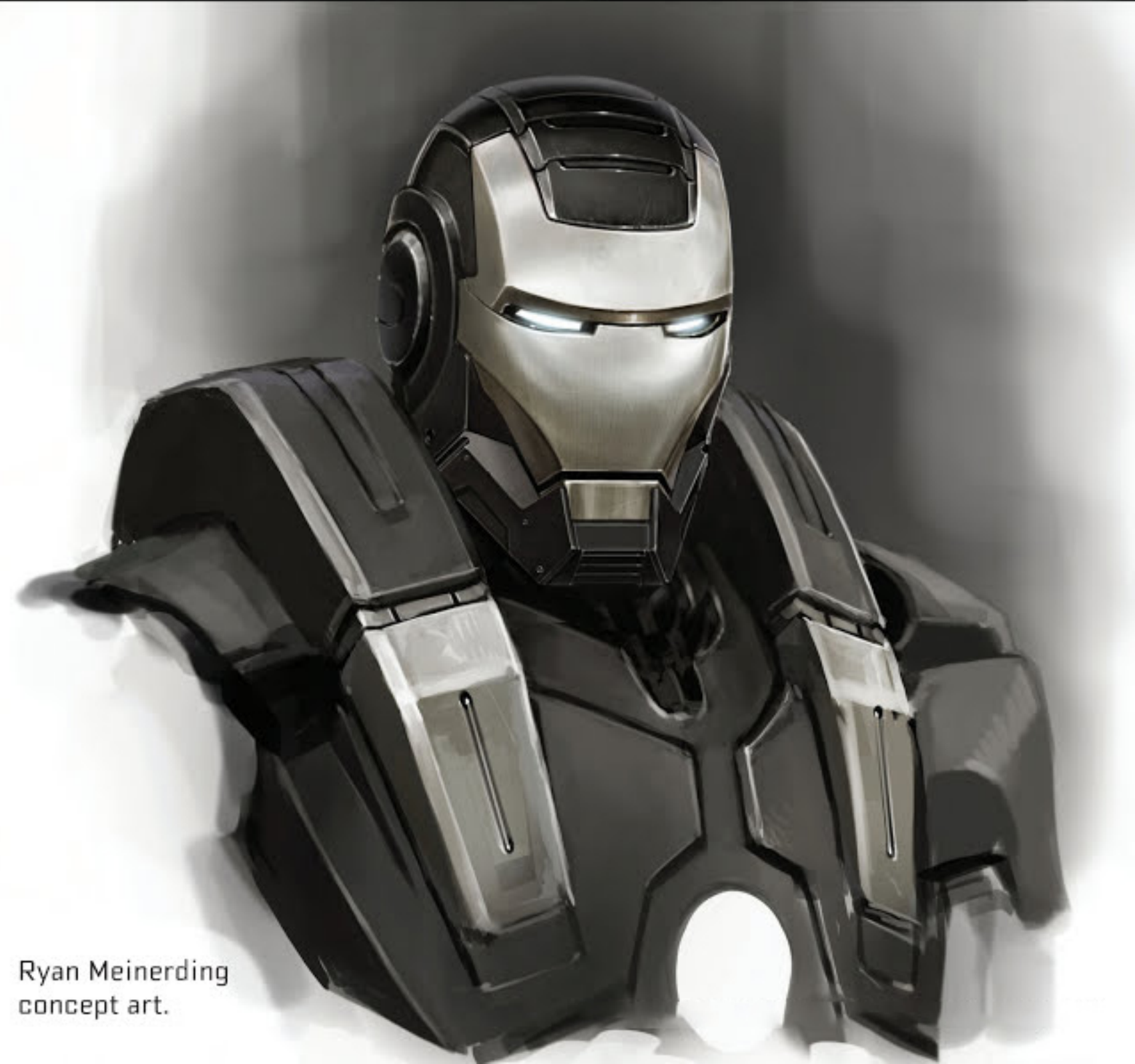
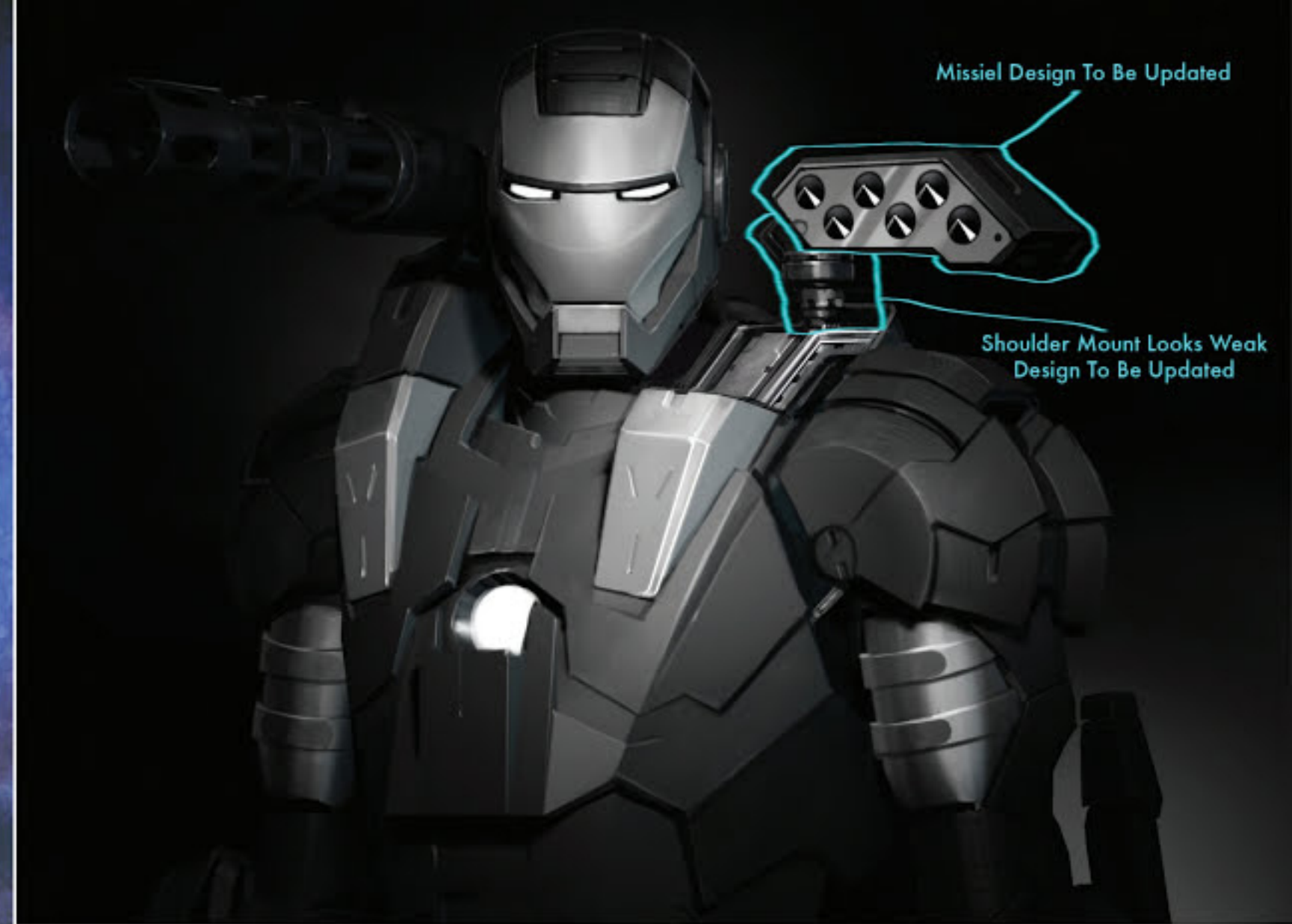








Adi Granov concept art.



Ryan Meinerding
concept art.



Phil Saunders concept art.



Phil Saunders concept art.



As with Iron Man himself, War Machine's technology evolves over time — but they advance in different ways, according to *Iron Man 3* Concept Artist Andy Park. Discussing his early exploration for War Machine in the threequel, he says, "Whereas Iron Man is akin to a Ferrari, War Machine is more of a military tank. Iron Man's form language is all about the speed and style — staple qualities of the man that is Tony Stark. Rhodey is the military man that is more about strength and power."

Andy Park concept art



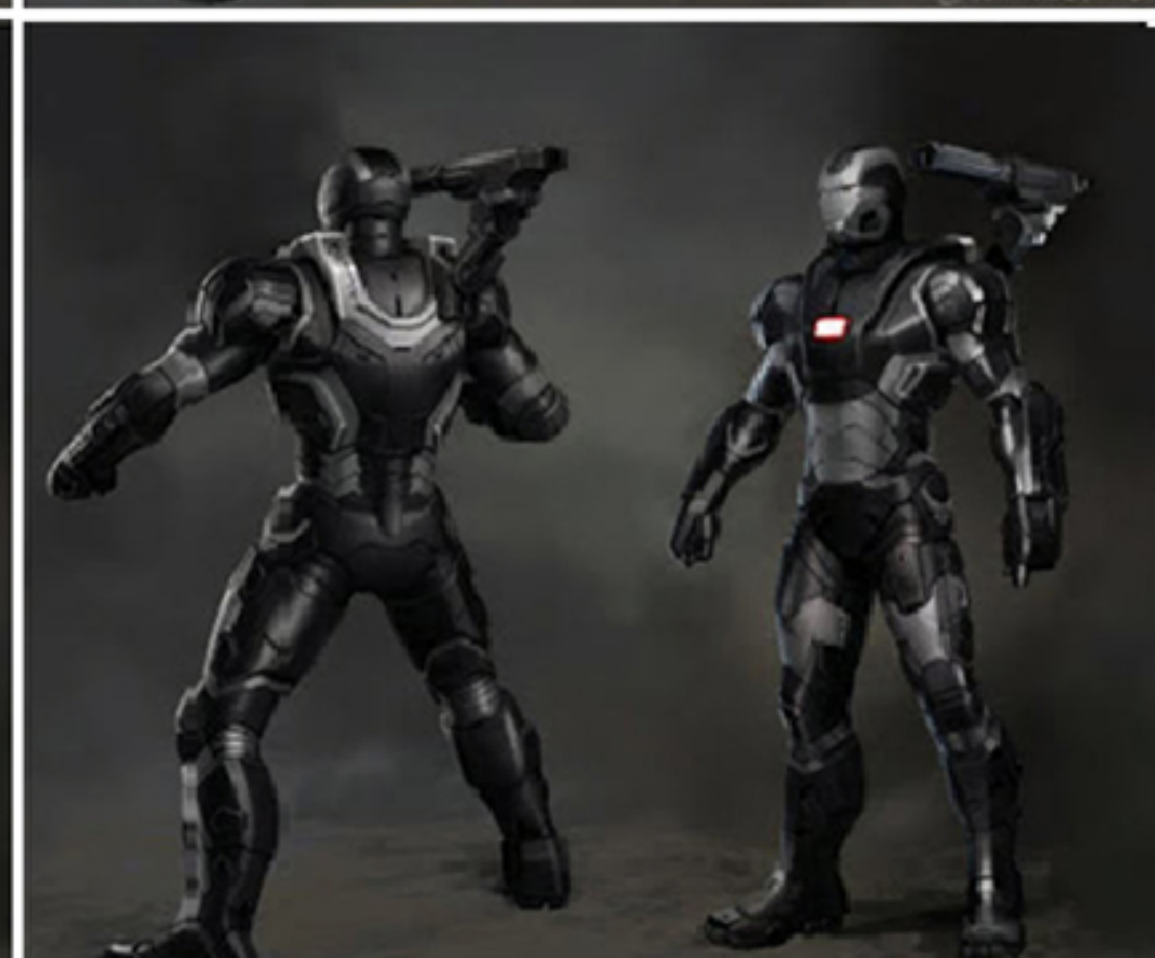
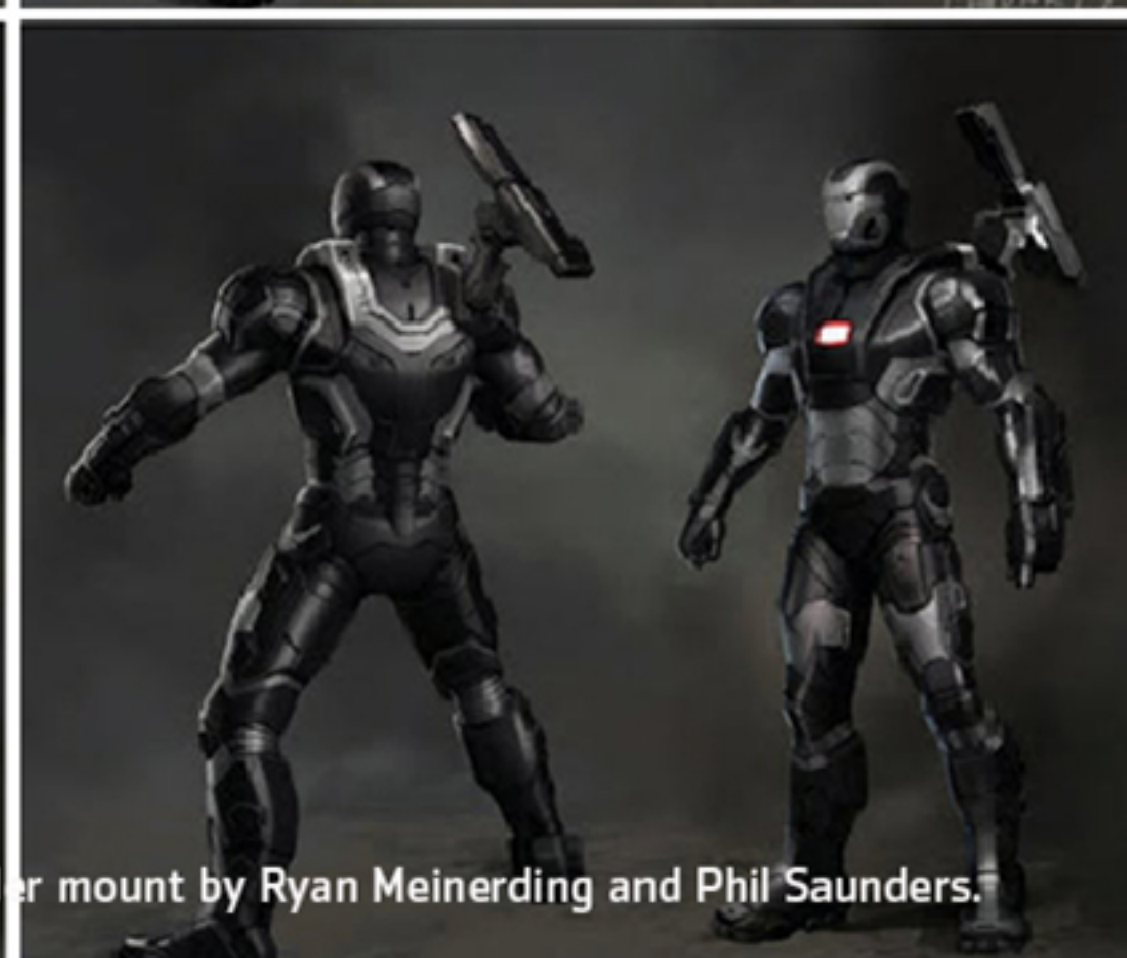
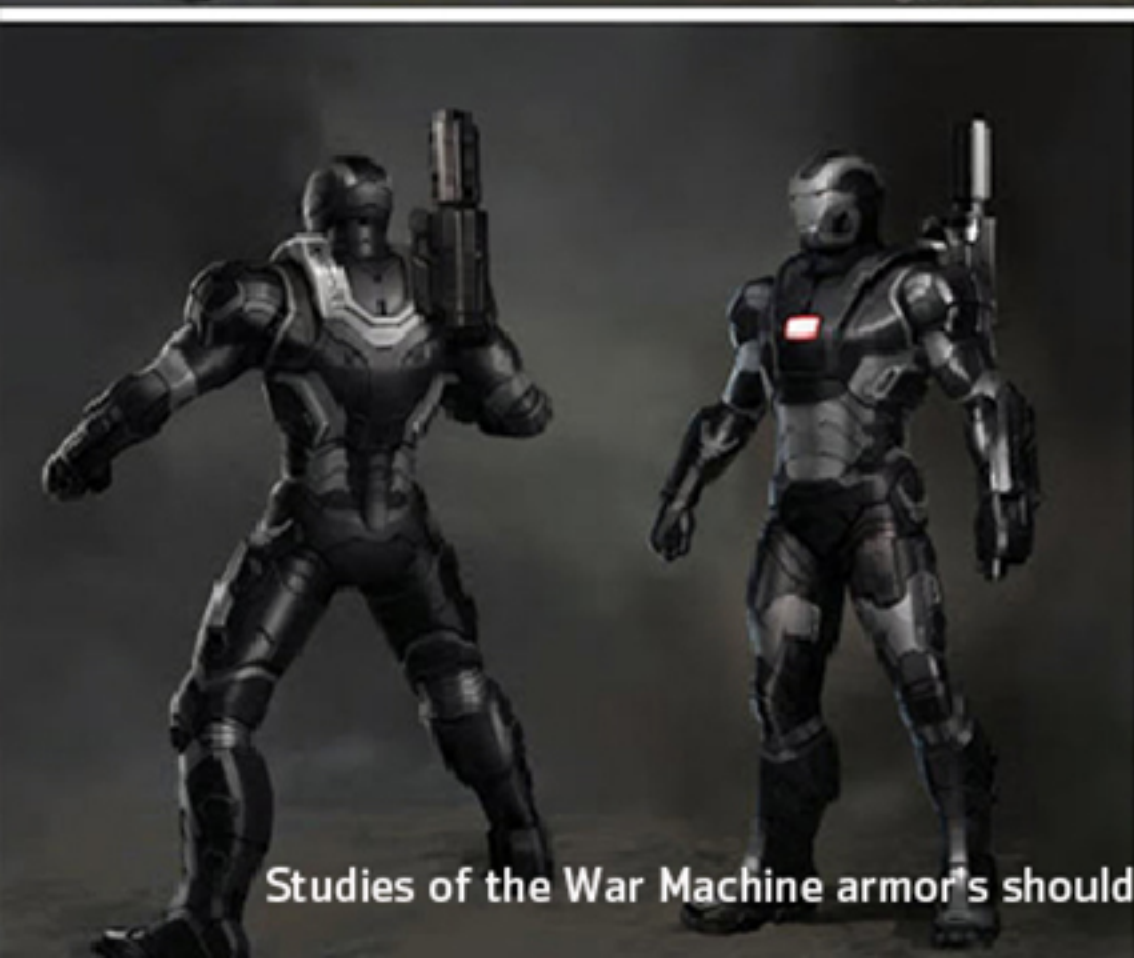






Ryan Meinerding concept art.





"The biggest challenge is the fact that you've got a minigun on his shoulder," Ryan Meinerding says. "And if the minigun doesn't rotate, somehow, all the way around, he's not going to be able to fire on the other side of his head. I think when you're reading comics, you don't necessarily notice." Making the ammo

feed believable, and thinking about where the bullets are stored, were also practical concerns when it came to adapting the source material for film. Meinerding adds, "Things that hopefully no one is going to question — maybe a few people will question — but hopefully we designed it well enough so that it's not the first thing on their mind."





Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Gun pre-mold still courtesy of Legacy Effects.

IRON PATRIOT



During *Iron Man 3*, Rhodey's suit gets a red-white-and-blue respray — the result, as Ryan Meinerding puts it, of someone in the government taking a look at War Machine and saying, "I can make that better, more patriotic." The new identity is crafted for Rhodey in order to provide a more PR-friendly hero for America, but — despite Tony Stark's mockery — the suit is just as powerfully destructive as ever. "War Machine and Iron Patriot are essentially the same design of armor with different paint jobs," says Lindsay MacGowan, Effects Supervisor at Legacy Effects. "When we got into the physical build of the suits, we invited Ryan and Phil Saunders to the studio to go over the different paint tests that we did to find a color that matched the designs as closely as possible."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.





"We did try and do versions that were a little more inherently about comedy," Ryan Meinerding says. "But we found that if we actually went about it as if someone was trying to make a cool-looking Iron Man suit into something patriotic, there was enough comedy even if the suit looked pretty cool."

Ryan Meinerding concept art.





Ryan Meinerding concept art.





THE FALCON



rodney.f



The process of painting a keyframe, whether it's an action moment or an emotional beat, begins "roughly" the same way. Concept Artist Rodney Fuentebella discusses his process for painting this sequence featuring Falcon and the Quinjet from *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*.



"Initially when doing keyframes, all we have is an idea of what the moment is from what is in the script. We will also talk with the filmmakers to see if they are looking for anything specific, and then we will get to work. The first thing I focus on is the basic shapes of the key elements involved and how they will sit in the frame. For this image, it is Falcon and the Quinjet chasing after him.



"I then begin to figure out the background elements and shapes, such as the helicarriers and clouds. I have to see how they all play together making sure the composition still reads. I also begin rendering more details on Falcon and the Quinjet.



"This next pass is refining the flow of the image — adding in the effects such as the explosions, bullets and smoke. It's easy for important things to get lost in the image when integrating effects, and I want to make sure the focus remains on the character(s) and the moment — as well as retaining the integrity of the composition.



"The final steps, much like a recipe, are about finishing up the details — rendering the image out while making sure the concept still reads clearly. I finish out the details on both the foreground and background elements, also adding any additional effects that I only blocked in during the previous version. I then take a step back and make sure it conveys a good sense of action and ultimately conveys the gravity of the intense situation."



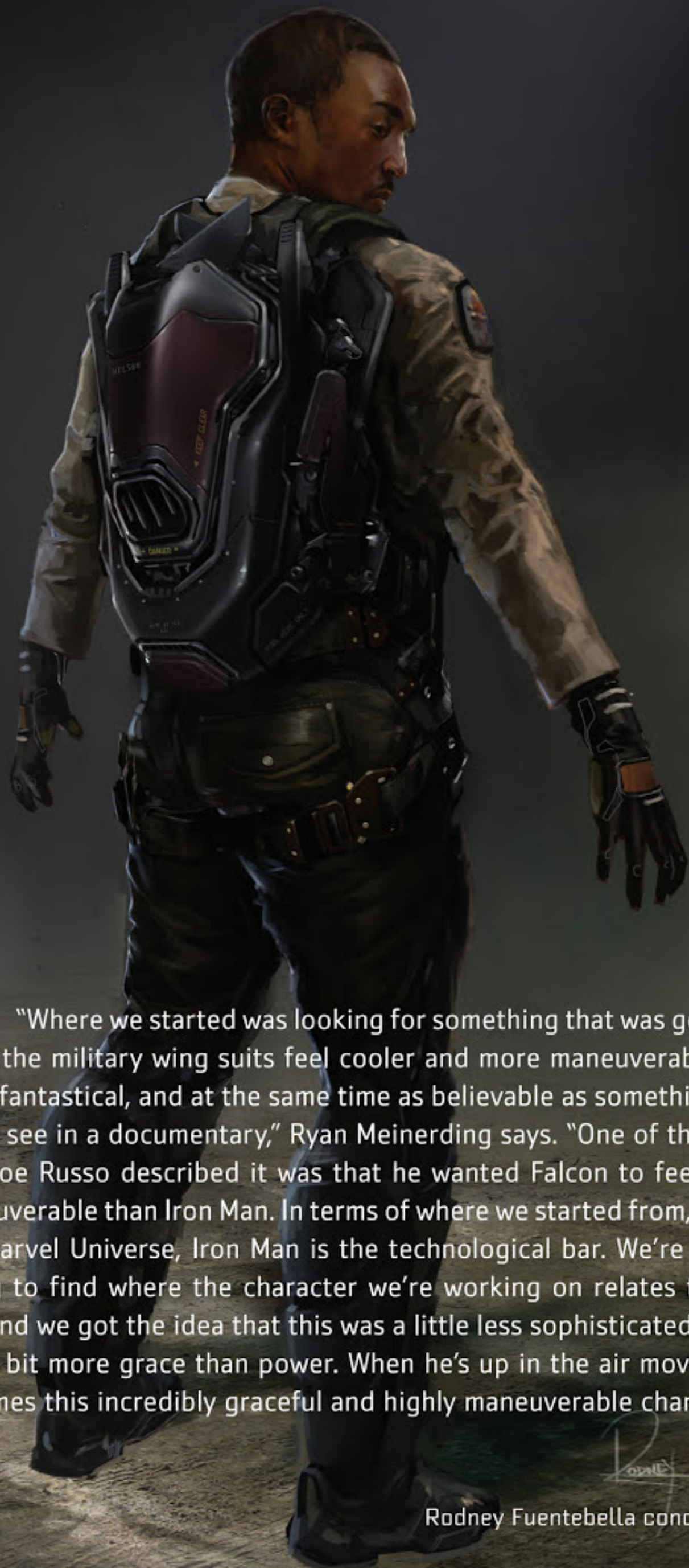


Rodney Fuentesbella concept art.



Родней Фуентесбелла авторским правом





"Where we started was looking for something that was going to make the military wing suits feel cooler and more maneuverable and more fantastical, and at the same time as believable as something you might see in a documentary," Ryan Meinerding says. "One of the ways that Joe Russo described it was that he wanted Falcon to feel more maneuverable than Iron Man. In terms of where we started from, within the Marvel Universe, Iron Man is the technological bar. We're always trying to find where the character we're working on relates to that bar. And we got the idea that this was a little less sophisticated, but it had a bit more grace than power. When he's up in the air moving, he becomes this incredibly graceful and highly maneuverable character."

Rodney Fuentebella concept art.





Josh Nizzi created a number of variations on Falcon's wings, some referencing feathers and some more mechanical with folding segments. "The wings are a mix of different materials, so they look like they could be layered," Nizzi says. "They needed to be really thin to look like they could collapse into his backpack. The actual armature is very small, and the fabric-like material is stretched over other stuff and has different levels of rigidity."



Josh Nizzi concept art.









But the Falcon isn't just about looking great in flight. As befits a hero named after a bird of prey, he can be deadly when needed. Josh Nizzi explains: "On Falcon's forearms he has attachment points where he can slide in the retractable guns that he has on his hips, and at that point they can be folded into compact machine guns."

Andy Park



Andy Park



Andy Park concept art.

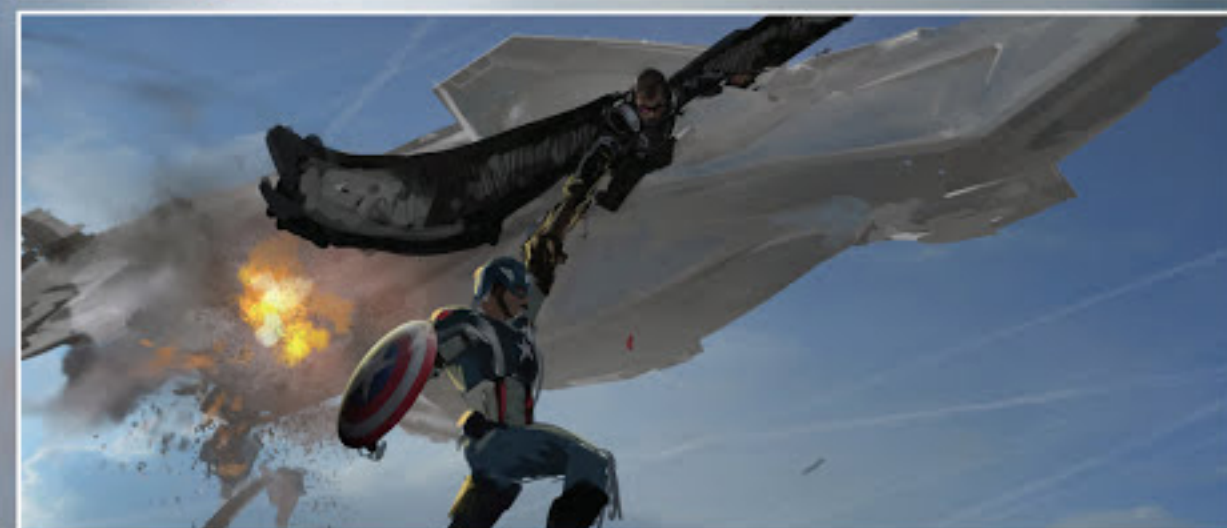








Rodney Fuentebella
keyframe process.



PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A MARVEL STUDIOS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH FARMVUE ENTERTAINMENT A FILM BY JON FAVREAU "IRON MAN" ROBERT DOWNEY JR. TERENCE HOWARD JEFF BRIDGES SHAIN SOUB AND GWYNETH PALTROW
MUSIC BY YANNI JARVAKI MUSIC SUPERVISOR DAVE JORDAN VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR JOHN NELSON VISUAL EFFECTS AND ANIMATION BY INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC EDITOR DAN LEEDENTAL, M.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER J. MICHAEL RIVA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MATTHEW URBATIQUE, A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LOUIS D'ESPOSITO PETER BILLINGSLEY JON FAVREAU ART DIRECTOR
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HULK

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MARVEL

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Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
SEQUENCES OF INTENSE ACTION VIOLENCE, SOME
FRIGHTENING SCI-FI IMAGES, AND BRIEF SUGGESTIVE CONTENT

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IRON MAN 2

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A MARVEL STUDIOS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH FAIRVIEW ENTERTAINMENT A JON FAVREAU FILM ROBERT DOWNEY JR.
"IRON MAN 2" GWYNETH PALTROW DON CHEADLE SCARLETT JOHANSSON SAM ROCKWELL MICKEY ROURKE AND SAMUEL L. JACKSON AS MIKE FURY MUSIC BY JOHN DEENEY MUSIC SUPERVISOR DAVE JORDAN
VISUAL EFFECTS AND ANIMATION BY INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC COSTUME DESIGNER MARY ZOPHRES CO-PRODUCERS JEREMY LATCHAM VICTORIA ALONSO EDITORS RICHARD PEARSON, A.C.E. DAN LEBENTAL, A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER J. MICHAEL RIVA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MATTHEW LIBATIQUE, A.S.C.
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PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A MARVEL STUDIOS PRODUCTION A FILM BY KEI
COLM FEORE RAY STEVENSON IDRIS ELBA KAT DENNINGS WITH RENE RUSSO AND ANTHONY HOPKINS AS OMN
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MARVEL STORY BY J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI AND MARK PROTOSEVICH THOR, MARVEL.COM MA

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CAPTAIN

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A MARVEL STUDIOS PRODUCTION A FILM BY JOSS WHEDON
HUGO WEAVING DOMINIC COOPER NEAL McDONOUGH DEREK LUKE AND STANLEY TUCCI
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MARVEL

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JEREMY LATCHAM PRODUCED BY KEVIN FEIGE STORY BY ZAK PENN AND JOSS WHEDON



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